# LANDFALL

## *A New Zealand Quarterly*

Includes index to volumes 6-10

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VOLUME TEN NUMBER FOUR DECEMBER 1956

# *Notes*

## I. A Prose Award

A LEAFLET sent out with the last number of *Landfall* announced a prose award to mark this, its tenth year. The award is intended to draw notice to the state of a depressed industry, and to offer it some little encouragement.

Gifted young writers in New Zealand turn to poetry rather than to prose at present. If young poets are not exactly as thick as blackberries, they are more plentiful than writers of prose; they also write better, in general, than their contemporaries who work in prose. And they are more various: they are not afraid to be their high-spirited, eccentric, inventive selves, while too much of the prose now being written exudes a tired smell of orthodoxy, a dull, spiritless, conforming sameness. It derives in part from that rough western equivalent to socialist realism, making its bow to Hemingway, which was popular in the thirties, and in part from the reportage adopted by many writers during the war, a valuable form of art at its best, but often no more than muddy journalism. Its staple, certainly, is everyday experience. And as the painter always goes back to nature, to the human form, so does the writer to everyday experience; that is his raw material. But raw material is only the starting point. More, the writer must be master of his experience, as Professor J. Y. T. Greig has reminded us (in his Macmillan Brown lectures, recently broadcast) in discussing how Byron put experience to use—though mastery of experience comes to each writer in a different way. Poetry may be born in a rush, yet has to be shaped and polished until it perfectly fills the mould prepared for it in nature, which requires of the poet more quiet reflection, hard thinking, cultivated taste and mature judgment than is popularly supposed; what poetry does not demand, or not from most poets, is the yearlong steady application, the sheer labour, patient and untiring, which prose writers have to learn. Poetry is in some respects—but only in some—the easier art to practise. It is for instance easier in the conditions of employment today to write poetry while living much like other citizens—that is, to write the occasional poetry for which a poet's whole life is

the preparation; and most poetry, greater and lesser, is occasional. But imaginative writers as such find their only home in the interstices of the social structure; and from there, obscurely making something out of nothing, they subtly transform the society in which they have no place and no function, its innocent enchanters rather than its unacknowledged legislators. The more evident, the more powerful transformation, is effected today by writers of prose; the rewards of prose consequently are greater from many points of view. That may not be apparent in New Zealand. But everywhere the good writer has to create his own public, his market, by much the same means.

As a people—as farmers, businessmen, writers—New Zealanders tend, being impatient, to ask for quick results. Our art, particularly in prose, suffers through that impatience; for prose, whether it be story, novel, biography or travel book, demands ripeness of form and perfection of language in its kind no less than poetry does. Although as an occupation the practice of an art may be only part-time, the art itself is a lifelong vocation.

## II. The Teaching of English

These social and temperamental forces that operate against the writing of prose are serious enough. But another circumstance works against it too, a far more disturbing one. New Zealanders are not being educated to write or to speak English well, or to appreciate it. They are not being given a command of the English language, except at a very simple level and not always then. Both average and exceptional children leave school, many of them, not only innocent of grammar, but so ignorant of common English idiom that one would think they never met it: when they have to write plain English, their use of idiom is liable to be surprisingly and alarmingly defective. If they cannot write, how can they understand, and how can they make themselves understood, except in the simplest terms or in a very hazy approximate fashion? The conclusion is unavoidable, that English literature is very slowly being closed to New Zealand children, because they are not being given the only means of understanding it, which is a sound knowledge of the language coming from reading, writing, and formal study.

This means, too, that they are not being given the means of understanding the world they live in. If they lack a proper com-

mand of their own language, how can they be expected to understand the extremely technical processes in physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, engineering and the rest on which our society depends? That any number of boys can repair a motor car or construct a radio set is valuable, but it implies only a modicum of knowledge and no necessary understanding of the principles on which motor cars and radios work. The more complex the process, or the more abstract the principle, the more precise must be the language used to explain it, and the more will understanding depend on an exact grasp of language. Without such a grasp, again, how is it possible to judge the appeals of advertisers and experts, or of demagogues, of quack medicines, of fancy prophets, of all the nostrums that our age spawns? How are men to distinguish between the claims of political parties, between communism and capitalism, between totalitarian and democratic forms of government, if they cannot understand exactly what is being said to them? They will be taken in by every specious and tendentious appeal, swept by waves of unreasoning panic, and led into courses of action that betray everything they believe in. The late uproar about juvenile immorality is an example of the way in which a country can be stampeded by vague threats and warnings if it fails to ask a few elementary questions about them, to demand some exact information, and to think before it acts. Why did the country fail, in this case? Largely because the teaching of English in our schools does not train children to use words responsibly themselves, and to ask what other people mean by them.

Not everyone, indeed, can understand everything, nor will everyone ask questions. But demands upon understanding, at all levels of intelligence, are greater probably than they have ever been. What is necessary then at all levels is a sound grasp of the language, which all have in common: a nation's language is its greatest common possession, the one upon which social cohesion rests and in which its real identity lives and expresses itself. Those who fail to understand properly, at whatever level, cannot be responsible. And the irresponsible are easily made slaves.

Our methods of teaching English, in short, are in danger of cutting us off from our past, and incapacitating us for the world we live in. New Zealand children are leaving school as cripples: they are crippled for life by an inadequate command of their own language: crippled by the methods which have already crippled many of their younger teachers.

The evidence? It is to be found in the written work of many if not most university students, a large number of whom are train-

ing to be teachers. It is to be found in the writings of school-teachers, university teachers, and able men in all kinds of occupation, professional, scientific, technical and commercial, who are handicapped for life by their inability to write good English. It is to be heard every day on the radio. It is to be heard . . . but there is no need to go further.

This will be borne out by the staff of university arts faculties; by editors; by business and professional men; by anybody who combines a sound grasp of the language with eyes to see and ears to hear. In university English and language departments particularly the cry is constant, that far too many students come to university unable to write plain clear English, and handicapped in tackling another language because they do not know their own. It is less that their grammar is shaky, than that they are unfamiliar with the most ordinary grammatical terms and with the meaning and use of the commonest English idioms.

It is no longer thought necessary to teach English in the schools as a formal subject. It is assumed that children will pick it up as naturally as breathing, since it is their own tongue.[1] So they will, up to a point—up to what point, and just how, is all too evident. But in education, properly so called, picking up has to be combined with learning—learning in order to understand. Unless they learn, formally, children will never use English correctly and exactly, and so never have the essential foundation for using it freely and imaginatively, with knowledge, with appreciation, with love—the love that should be woken early for a language so irresistibly fertile, various, and adaptable, the most potent imaginative and practical instrument they can be offered. They will never understand it and know the delight of understanding. They will never be able to take it without question as the basis for other studies, in all of which English is the medium of teaching ('Every teacher is a teacher of English', in George Sampson's words, quoted in the Thomas Report), and for a practical understanding of the world. Whatever our schools may teach, they cannot provide education in the only real sense unless they make English the heart of their teaching; nor can universal education be justified if it fails to teach this, for most of what we have in common as a people is enshrined in it and depends upon it.

It seems clear that one of the reasons for children's poor grasp

[1] This is plainly the assumption underlying the recommendations on the teaching of grammar made in the Thomas Report, which treat the subject as of so little consequence that the schools could only be encouraged to drop it. See *The Post-Primary School Curriculum*, Wellington, 1944, p.20.

of English is that they do not read either enough or in the right way. Although school practice varies, most children, instead of learning to read books, are bred on extracts—carefully chosen morsels or titbits, by which no book and no writer can be appreciated and no language mastered. The Department of Education and many teachers are apparently strongly opposed to the use of set books for examinations. Yet the Department's officers, the inspectors of secondary schools, by their recommendations (which have almost mandatory force) of the textbooks which schools should use, have been in effect imposing set books; and a limited range of these, while not used for examination purposes, are the principal class reading up to and including the Fifth Forms and sometimes the Sixth. This might be defensible if the books were complete works (whether novels, travel books, poems or whatever the subject may be), but they are not: they are books of extracts.[2] The Victorians might have called them Beauties; in our age, it is plain that they are Digests—of a superior sort no doubt, but Digests none the less, when those taught to read them are taught to read nothing else.

To bring up children to read extracts is dangerous. It does not train the mind—the imagination, the whole human person—to grapple with large subjects and great issues: it can give no sense of growth, of the processes of history, of structure, of architectonic, so that instead of exercising and stretching the mind it restricts it to near views and narrow perspectives: it does nothing to fit children for a world in which they will be confronted, not with carefully chosen and labelled problems, but with vast terrifying struggles and pressures and with powers that appear to be beyond human comprehension and control. Further, by making for discontinuity, it encourages distraction, a continual titillation of mind and sense, which may not harm the well-balanced adult, but can provide no foundation for living and is likely to undermine the delicate security of the young. It thus leads directly to the digest habit in all its viciousness, a habit by which men are so conditioned that all their opinions become alike, all conforming to the will of that unknown power (advertiser? dictator?) which controls their reading, just as another power controls their listening. Only if people read and listen thoughtfully, ask questions, and are not

[2] In this matter the Thomas Report seems to have been ignored, perhaps because it is not quite explicit enough: 'Books of extracts, anthologies, and books about books are not "real books", though they have their usefulness. Study of them is not a substitute for reading.' ibid., p.21. The Report also says (p.18), '. . . each class should read twenty times as much as the average class does now.'

satisfied with ready-made opinion, will they save themselves from becoming mass men, and save New Zealand from becoming a mass society.

Civilization is transmitted above all by language, which expresses and defines traditions and social climates and in so doing decides the ends for which all techniques are to be used. Our future hangs, of course, on many things. But in so far as we can determine it ourselves, can resolve that our descendants shall inherit in full what we have inherited, our future depends on the way English is taught in our schools.

EARLE SPENCER

## *For Margaret*

TO HER

I LOVE you

So I wonder and burn

And all my Adam
Nailed and Jesus-stricken
At the light's groin
Arches and turns
As his kingdoms come
With a spasm that shatters
His landscape into a profusion
Of red flowers.
Flowers that burst
Into a vision of you
Alone and still
On a tower of all the birds
Singing at my edges.

Your tongue, in my mouth,
Like an apricot.
The tumult of your thighs
The sigh of your breasts
As my hands unfold you

The sob of the world
As my rooster calls you
And the world turning
And the rose indifferent
And we all gone into a flock of sparrows
And on the high peaks tremendous anvils
Singing hosannas to the sun.

## FOR LOVE OF A GOOD WOMAN

i

Do not expect me to love you all the time
For sometimes I will be thinking of something else
And grubbing away industriously at my thought.
Whether it is big or small does not matter.
If you disturb me I shall be annoyed.

ii

It must be nearly a hundred years
Since a man could say to his neighbour
'I have a woman that I must beat frequently'
And have the reply come,
'I have a woman that I must beat regularly'.
How lucky a young man then am I
In this day and age to have found one
Combining in her person so many virtues
That one must needs adopt both measures.

iii

Because you are free and a little bit mad
I can hold you forever.
Because you are a woman and a darting thing
I am often confused.
Still I suppose I must not complain
For men have endured worse things
Yet if I am to wring some peace from this union
I had better become ambidextrous.

iv

I suppose in this last song
I ought to praise her beauty

But no, I'll talk of me again.
'Oh, how I rejoice in her.'

## A QUESTION

Evening has reasoned with these flowers
I bring you, until blue walls, red walls
And walls all the colours of feathers
Now serenely keep their sweet hearts;
But they will speak my love for you
More gracefully than I.
And tomorrow day they will open, dear,
And gently perhaps, will breathe my name
So that you hearing the little pause
For the life of a smile will turn to see;
And remember how they came.

You are a flower in my heart; and my head was an evening
Or a shrill wind somehow come to close you.
But I am become so soon a sun,
Gently with gentle fingers asking
'Will you open and breathe my name
So that while I am true I may look into
Your sweet heart; and wonder how you came.'

## BEAUTY IS A SONG YOU SING

Beauty is a song you sing more tremulously than cathedrals.
Willows coming down to drink in a chorus, answer
Spring lifting or a sudden shower, their branches
All puzzled together; whereas you are never uncertain
But turn so surely to each new sounding.
Hardly a time goes by without your finding
Something evergreen of your own, or someone's, making
And your eye will chart the ding-dong of the weather
Or the curve of a famous small boy as if
They were for your own private pleasure and joy.

Beauty, dear, is the happiness of you giving
More completely than anybody I have ever known

To all creatures and growing things, whatever is living
In this world; or in the next if you were shown.

### HOMECOMING

As you come towards me
Your bare thin feet fill me with delight.
I had forgotten how beneath your skin
The bird bones, even more vital than lilies,
Burn with a soft slow reticence, white
Where your breasts blossom and where your shoulder dips
So gently to rest in the flow of your body.
And I had forgotten, that when in its wisdom
The light slips into a shadow, your arm is silver
With that same glow as of lilies.
Your litheness is here at my finger tips.
Do my hands remember?
In my mouth is the innocence of your name.

Move again. Your legs are whispering
To each other their little ancient secrets.
Your arms swing high to your head and your breasts
Flare. I ride down into the darkness and come to rest
In a cradle of flame; and glad to be there.

## DAN DAVIN

# *Winter Galway*

Lost in my father's youth is that strange land.
No goats ran leaping from the hill
When I came there and the fairies did not know
My father's son. Only the grey walls
Still ran greyly over the moody hills
And gentle Irish rain fell melancholy
On the son of a lost son.

RODERICK FINLAYSON

# *The Bulls*

THE YOUNG new bull arrived at the farm that morning. He was a handsome two year old Jersey, sleek and quiet eyed. Steve, the drover from Matapoi, brought him along and turned him into the yard. The old man and the boy came out and looked him over. The boy could tell the old man was pleased with the bull by the way he shuffled slowly around the yard with his hands behind his back looking at the animal while he whistled a little through his rangy moustache. The boy thought the bull looked good too.

'Well, you can take the old fella, Steve,' the old man said.

The drover didn't bother to reply. He was a thickset florid man with a red-veined nose, hard unfriendly blue eyes, and close-cropped sandy hair. His dog was a lean yellow cur, unfriendly too, slinking and showing his teeth when the boy spoke to him. The drover rode a gaunt chestnut mare so long-legged the man looked too tall in the saddle. He sat staring hard down on the boy.

'Wouldn't want to tag along with that man—not at any price,' the boy thought, edging away from the unfriendly gaze.

'Come along in, Steve, the missus has dinner on the table,' the old man said. He looked at the boy. 'Come on, boy, don't keep us waiting, looking like you're dumb.'

The drover dismounted and led his horse to the water trough. 'Gotta be getting on the road,' he grumbled as if ungrateful for the offer of a meal. 'You never know when it comes to getting an old bull away from his home paddocks.'

Nevertheless, once he was in the farm kitchen, he ate a real good fill, gobbling great mouthfuls of beef and potato without any sign of enjoyment and without speaking a word. But when he had had enough and was handed his second cup of tea, he sat back and smirked at the old man's wife. 'Meal like this here, missus, reminds me of when I rode champion steeplechasers and was feasted and feted by the girls all up and down the country.' Having made this statement he drank the tea in long sucking gulps and became as morose as before.

When the men left the house the drover went straight to his horse and mounted. 'Come on, Thomson, where's the old devil?' he shouted.

The old man with the boy went on foot to the back paddock opened the gate and called to the big red bull. 'Hey-aah, bully! Hey-aah!' The red bull lumbered out with a slow toss of his horns. They followed him up the drive past the cowpaddock gate where he eyed the grazing herd.

'Run ahead and open the road gate, boy,' the old man said.

The old bull, sensing what they meant to do, balked at the gate. But the drover spurred his horse forward and cracked his whip angrily. The yellow cur snapped at the bull's heels and swung on his tail. And with the horseman lashing at his hindquarters, the old bull was rushed through the gate and out onto the open road. It was a back country road of sandy yellow clay now dry and dusty, and it twisted aimlessly among clumps of manuka scrub and native heather. Gorse grew thick along the barbwire boundary fences.

'Keep him at the bloody gallop,' yelled the drover. 'He won't get no chance to be no bloody trouble.'

But the old bull braked with his four legs bunched and turned quick as a cat turning to double back toward the gate that led to home and the herd. The drover swore freely and let out half-choked yells. His horse seemed to the boy to be far too long-legged for this kind of a job, and the man was too heavy and too high in the saddle.

The yellow dog yelped beside the bull. The old man and the boy tried to head the animal but he charged past and jumped the fence. He was in his home paddock again. Slowly he stalked toward the cows indignantly shaking his head.

'Do you think I have time to waste?' the drover shouted. 'Get him out of there, Thomson.'

Again the boy opened the road gate. Steve cantered in with his whip cracking and the yellow dog made straight for the bull, but neither man nor dog could get the bull near the gate.

'I'll turn some of the herd out with him,' the old man said. 'Run them up the road aways and then let them drop behind when we've got the old fella on the move.'

The drover cantered round the herd, and they got half a dozen cows and the old bull on the run. They stampeded them up the road, the cows moo-ing and blaa-ing at such unusual treatment, the bull tossing his head in agitation as he ran with the foremost cows. But Steve impatiently galloped among the mob and tried to rush the bull out ahead and up the road. The old fellow was too knowing. He swerved sharply into the gorse and leapt the neighbour's fence. There he stood in the strange paddock pawing

the ground until the sods flew. Then he drove his horns into the broken ground and tossed the dirt high over his head.

The neighbour, a man named Jackson, had been watching from up by his shed. His herd in the next paddock was becoming restive and his bull was trotting excitedly up the dividing fence, so he put his two dogs on the intruder at the same time that the drover, who had swung open the road gate, now charged across the paddock with his dog. Steve slashed the bull's flanks with his stockwhip and the three dogs snapped and slavered at his heels forcing him over to the fence, forcing him to a short standing jump that brought him down on the wires with the barbs ripping his legs.

The old man called to the boy, 'Boy, we gotta get him on his way ourselves. That damn man's no good. He's only maddening the beast. Now be ready to head him away from home. You're young and nimble on your feet. I've got to keep at his heels.'

The big red bull was free of the twanging wires and was crashing through the manuka scrub. I'd like to stay handy to duck under that fence, the boy thought, but look out or you'll get pinned against that barbwire. Better keep to the open.

He was on his toes, tensed in the middle of the dusty yellow road. Suddenly he saw the bull coming, head low, neck arched. The little eyes were bloodshot and threads of saliva were trailing from the bull's lolling tongue. His flanks were streaked with blood and sweat and dust, and the places where the barbs had ripped were growing redder. The old fella's taking it hard, the boy thought. But he's dangerous like that, he reminded himself. He spread his arms wide and jumped up and down on his toes till the bull was almost up to him. Then he spun around and jumped aside into the manuka as the bull, made to change his course slightly, lumbered past, his great neck muscles bulging.

Boy, the boy said to himself, when it comes to leaving, you are as bad as that old bull.

The old man had the dog on to him turning him before the drover could catch up. They got the bull on the run up the road again, but again he skidded in the dust, swung around and charged back.

'Shake your coat at him, boy,' the old man shouted. 'Boss the bull, boss him!'

The boy peeled off his jacket and shook it at the bull, jumped up and down shaking it in front of the bull. The bull changed course somewhat. The dog harried him, giving the boy a chance to jump clear of his path into the manuka. The bull crashed through the scrub, flattening the bushes in his way.

I must watch my step, thought the boy. Better not slip on a stone or trip in the scrub.

Again the old man and the dog turned the bull, again the boy danced and pirouetted in front of him and kept his eyes away from home. These actions of the boy with his flapping coat, the old man with his prodding stick, his whoops and cries, were not without a plan. If they did not drive the bull up the road at least they kept him from home. It was a game of chase, a game between dancing toes and pounding hoofs around the scattered manuka clumps by the dusty yellow road. No one, neither the bull nor the men would admit defeat.

'We cannot drive him, boy,' the old man gasped when he found a chance to be near the boy. 'We must wear him down. It isn't hard to wear him down when you are young and nimble on your feet. Keep in front of him.'

The old bull was no longer so nimble on *his* feet. Gradually they were wearying him. He panted, and his tongue lolled. The unconcerned drover left him to the man and the boy on foot. Sour faced, he sat his tall horse at the roadside, while he rolled a cigarette.

The old man and the boy were tiring too. With his cigarette unlit the drover quickly uncoiled his stockwhip and gave a mighty crack. 'Leave him to me,' he yelled. Spurring his horse forward, whistling his eager yellow dog, he made a final charge that carried the stumbling bull before him up the road, with no chance of turning back.

'That's goodbye to him,' the old man said. 'That's goodbye.'

A cloud covered the sun, and the boy, standing still on the road watching the distant lumbering bull, felt the chill of the evening breeze. He shrugged into his old brown coat.

Next day after breakfast, the old man said, 'Well, now we must ring the young one.' He and the boy went out to the stockyard where the young bull was. He looked at them with great wondering eyes. His coat was sleek and the muscles rippled when he moved.

The old man walked as he often walked, with his hands loosely clasped behind his back, but now in his right hand he carried a length of rope. He walked with a shambling sideways gait, and he did not look at the bull. But the bull kept his eyes on the man. Not looking at the bull but slowly shambling as though to go past him, all the time drawing nearer the animal, the old man slowly

and casually backed the bull into the corner where the bail post was.

The bull constantly shifted ground to keep his eyes on the old man. Then the old man flipped a noose of the rope over the bull's horns, over his head, and threw his weight on the rope as the bull backed, and took a turn around the strong post. As the bull kept backing round and round the shortening rope pulled his head down to the post.

'Now we have him where we want him,' the old man said. 'Have you got the things?'

The boy had the necessary things—the bright new copper ring and the steel spike and the old tin can and dopper black with cattle tar. He put these down on the dry hard ground near the post. The bull was rolling his eyes till the whites showed, his curling tongue licked at his nostrils and he panted a little.

'Hold the rope, boy.' As the boy kept the rope taut, the old man took hold of the bull by the horns as though to wrestle with him and slowly he forced the bull to his knees and then right off his feet so that he rolled over and lay on his side in the dust.

'Now hold him by his horns,' said the old man.

The boy grasped the strong young horns.

'Now sit on his back—up there by his neck. That's right. Hold him down while I do the job.'

'How can I hold him down if he goes to get up?' asked the boy.

'Don't you worry boy. It's just sitting there that does the trick,' the old man said.

So the boy sat on the bull's back. He could feel the muscles quivering, the nerves twitching, beneath the sleek hide. On his bare legs where his jeans had slipped up, he could feel the animal warmth and the silky smoothness. He looked at the nervous rolling eye, the clean sharp young hoofs. He slipped his hand from one curved polished horn and fondled the thick curls below it. Some of the bull's great strength seemed to fill the boy's slender body. Soon he would be leaving the farm. He, and the old bull, would be gone—and this young bull and the old man left.

Yesterday and today I've bossed two bulls, the old one and the young, he thought, and I feel fine. Going out into the world, leaving this farm, don't worry me any more.

The young bull trembled all over and gave a low moaning 'blah'. With the steel spike the old man was piercing the flesh between the nostrils. It was tough going. Sweat dripped from the old man's brow and his hands were trembling before the steel came through. Then he pulled the spike out and reached for the cattle

tar and put a dop of that on the wound. The bull sniffed the stinging fumes and bowed his head, his whole body relaxing.

'Now hand me the ring—and the screw and the screwdriver,' the old man said. But now he was shaky and nervous and the old blunt fingers fumbled with the little screw after he had forced the open ring through the bull's nose. 'Here boy, you do it,' he cried at last. 'Your fingers are still young and nimble.'

So the boy slid from the bull's back and fixed the ring in the bull's nose and the job was done. The old man undid the rope and the young one, after lying inert for a few moments, felt that he was free and slowly got to his feet. He gave another low 'blah' and shook his head and ambled off. Then he broke into a trot and then into a gallop, cavorting a little as he went, so very young and nimble on his feet.

The old man watched him go. Slowly he gathered up his things and shambled towards the house. The boy followed him with just a bit of a swagger in his walk.

LINCOLN LEE

# *Two Poems*

## THE CRICKET

(from the French of Béranger)

As in my inglenook I stir
The coals, and muse on right and wrong,
Come, cricket, join in cheerful song
An old but tireless caroller.
Tiny cricket, let no care
Catch us, here or anywhere.

Our fates have this in common, thou
Chirp'st to beguile the children, while
I the old age of men beguile—
Craftsman, soldier, man at the plough.
Tiny cricket, let no care
Catch us, here or anywhere.

In our warm nook, at ease, alone,
    We two will sing—what merriment there!—
    Thou in thy chink, I in my chair.
God give us luck to live unknown.
    Tiny cricket, let no care
    Catch us, here or anywhere.

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY (1942)

I HEARD that music often before I was born;
An old tune for the black keys; Chopin wrote it;
And as old tunes, like old smells, carry us back,
That tune evokes prenatal memories
Of a curious unhuman comfortableness
In dark moist warmth as of primordial ooze,
Or a remote sea-ancestor drifting deep
In some slow tropical stream.
                Music came first
And may it come at the last too, when I slip
Back into time, a queer inedible fish
Caught by that jesting angler, Life, unhooked,
Mauled a bit, stroked a bit, poked in the guts and let go.
Yet music, so much to me, remains to this day
An Ultima Thule seen through a telescope.
Like many another fool who wastes his breath
Repeating how he would love to paint, write, play,
Year after year and lacking the spunk to try,
I never learnt my notes:— much like my other
Arch mania, astronomy, emasculated
By reading books and leaving the stars themselves
To sparkle unobserved.

                Those mind-emergings
When Rumplestiltskins staged my remote world:
Those building days of tip-cat, hoops and tops,
Marbles and kites, were much I now imagine
As most encounter life-wards. After puberty
Leading to what it usually leads to—well,
Was I much different to the rank and file?
The real, if callow, sufferings, fears, long prayers,
Those nonage tragedies—consciousness of sin—
It seems are the usual lot of sensitive lads;

Like treating one's bodily make-up as obscene;
Sadism with insects; secret aesthetic efforts;
Or finding from the Bible that one is damned.

Sure, we must be 'born again', and it meant for me
Another thirty years to extricate
My ego from those accursed Calvinists
My father had broken away from in his boyhood,
But carried over in me. No matter meanwhile
That I grow old, so Calvin's claws are cut
And his teeth pulled.
The First World War (but I bore you
If young; for the young that war is still unfought;
They want their own war and, egad, they've got it)—
That war, I say, by dint of fear of death
Cured me of much of the psychic fear instilled
By those same Calvinist forbears. I now taunt them
In their unwholesome graves.
Praise Providence
That man learns in one way and one way only—
Experience! What of my thirty years in the Law?
(Years of incarceration brooding escape.)
Advising clients how to invest their money
Led to the muddling of my own investments.
You see, I only knew one side of the thing
And mulled it when I stood in the clients' shoes;
And then, experience gained, wanted the cash
Wherewith to recoup.
Thus Providence sees to it
We do not all grow rich in early life
And have to take in one another's washing.

Money! It has but three advantages,
Travel, riding on horseback, smoking cigars;
So far outweighed by its embarrassing drawbacks
And I have proved, these profit-rigging times,
That one can live well on a few pounds a week.

Since experience comes only with the years,
And youth is deaf, it cannot accumulate
To breed precocious wisdom, bolster mankind
And make the world too big for its own boots.

Snobbishness took a lifetime to dislodge

(That workman's backside stuck in your face in the tram!)
Likewise conservative bias, now both beaten
As I have taken a leftist slant, can hobnob
With butcher, baker and smelliest slaughterman.
Nostalgia for England needed drugging,
But now I've almost put the thing to sleep.
Then that panicky onrush of middle age
(Add fourteen to your age, Good God! It's sixty!)
At forty-six that scared me. Now? Well, well!

I'll not be keeping you much longer now.
Twice wed and not divorced and, at last, a father—
(That matutinal Mantalini nap-wash!)
Never too late! I have tipped up, I fancy,
The tankard of human activities.
It remains
To rise and retire another few thousand times,
Consume another hundredweight of tobacco,
Drink a few dozen kegs of home-brewed beer,
Make some new friends and enemies, sketch landscape,
Scribble in prose and verse (a dilettante
And well aware of it), hear endless music
(Noting, amazed, the accent of the announcer),
Hack up much firewood, build me this and that,
Grow ever leaner, tougher, grayer and gayer
(Will the Adrenalin Drive persist to the end?)
Liking my home, acting the prudent father,
An active, noisy, nosey old pantaloon,
Until that other Jester happens along
And takes me where (if anywhere) no man
Will ever guess, though guessing crippled his soul.

ALAN RODDICK

# *Three Poems*

## POEM IN THE WIND

Foetus-curled in a mothering bed
I awoke to a young, green morning
singing in the tossing trees; clouds
laughing in the whistling sky of summer

loitered into a diffident evening.
Gardens drowned in dew chattered
to bouncing birds mated in hedges
while I swam in the flowing fields of sunlight,

till the sun burned out my eyes, till the tickling
of the smouldering ends of nerves, chased me
into the shrinking house cool as the stars
under a curdled fist of cloud.

The yearlong days that walked the brooks
finding gold in every pebble
are gone, through the brown wood
into the bright landscape beyond.

Years now a day long
rise and fall on lunatic tides
talk an unfamiliar, liquid language
over the hourglass curve of the beach.

I run in the chanting trees, the leaves
green as sunset, with veins
smoking up from the chimney-stalks.
My hopeful treasure-clouds

founder under the heaving land.

## HOLIDAY

After the lamp-black, love-dark night
of 'possums tumble-thumping on the sky
and moths flattened on the chilly glass
with darkness looking over their shoulders;

after the waking scuffle of sparrows
and daylight trumpeting from the fence-posts,
and breakfast, with a road-map spread on the table:

capillary highways, quiet under dew
and lark song, strolling from hill to hill
over the bread, the marmalade and the tea cosy;

after a trek through the tossing dunes
feet squeaking in the crumpled sand:

somewhere between the first swim
and the gritty lunch, the sun grew tired
of being good, and went off and sulked
behind a cool, clouded sky.

Most unreasonably, we felt ourselves cheated
and the day wasted.

## SONG IN THE SUN

If I were troubled by the worm of age,
the thin, twig-brittle bones,
and morning body run to flesh;
if sun soft spring struck chill my brain,
collapsed to slack, grey ash;

if I were shadowed by the smell of death
reeking through the incense of the flowers,
my heart would cheat to grasp another breath
and, jealous, stop its ears
against the life beats of the wakening earth.

Then might my tingling mind conceive
new fires to sing my summer songs,
to slap my shining words alive
and force the quick, red sap to ring
my flowering flames, before I leave

this tall, white universe of sky;
my pharaoh-hearted mind relent,
set free a wide, green world, to cry
and rhyme the crisp stars, and invent
fresh, milk-sweet, whirling galaxies.

PETER MUNZ

# *Thomas Mann*

THOMAS MANN was born a member of an ancient and very respectable patrician family in the old Hansa town of Lübeck. When he had reached the age of early manhood, it became quite clear to him that he was not meant to be another patrician of his old city but that he wanted to write. He decided to break away not only from the mode of earning a living traditional in his family; but also from the beliefs and habits of his caste. This meant a life of adventure, of insecurity and of a never-ending quest. He decided to give up the life of a responsible citizen who does his duty towards his family and his society and who accepts the limitations of a life spent in the fulfilment of respectable duty.

As it was, he quickly became sufficiently successful as a writer to remove the danger of economic hardship; and his tastes had received a sufficiently strong imprint from his early family life to make him live, all his life, like a respectable, well-to-do member of the European middle classes. But this very respectability and outward calm and this sense of security gave him a magnificent opportunity for devoting all his attention and his very remarkable powers of intellect to exploring certain fields of human experience. Had he led a bohemian life, his debts, his turgid human relationships and the consequent emotional instability might have taken

such a toll of his energies, that he would have been unlikely to have been able to devote quite so much time to his art and philosophy. He was, as he said himself, a *bourgeois manqué.*

At the same time, he never overlooked the fact that his initial break-away from bourgeois life had revealed a pattern to him which he could well exploit both intellectually and artistically. Had he started writing for no other reason than that he wanted to write and was good with his pen, he might have become a good novelist—but never a great one. As it was, he had, right from the outset, a theme: the theme of the conflict between two kinds of life. There was, on one side, the life of respectability, of duty and of a well-measured, sober limitation. This was the life of the citizen: limited in its experiences and limited in depth. But a life which could be, from a moral point of view, highly satisfactory; or at least, as satisfactory as any life is likely to be. It was the life of sanity: at its worst, it was led by a business-man without interests and without much understanding. At its best, it was the life of the sober humanist and rationalist, a life of hard work and much clarity in a confined sphere. 'All warmth,' Thomas Mann once wrote, 'all goodness, all humour, are derived from the bourgeois love of the humane, of all that is alive and ordinary. It almost seems to me that that love is the charity of which it is written that if one were without it, even though one spoke with the tongues of men and of angels, one would become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.'

On the other side, there was the life of the artist, the life which he himself, in imagination rather than in external conditions, had chosen. It was a life of adventure. Its representative was the man who sacrificed human relationships for the sake of his quest after the unknown and perhaps even the unknowable. At its best it could lead to some contact with the darkest and deepest springs of the universe; and at its worst, it was likely to destroy not only the men and women who came into contact with the representative of that life, but also the man who led it, himself.

As far as I know, Thomas Mann never found a reconciliation between these two ways of life; and, indeed, it is hard to see how anyone could reconcile the two extremes.

It is true, however, that the calm serenity of reconciliation is by no means absent from his writings. Such reconciliation is hinted at in Hans Castorp's dream during the snow-storm in the second volume of *The Magic Mountain;* and is fully developed in the four Joseph novels. Hans Castorp's dream, it is true, reads, but for the charm of its style, as if it had been copied from a text-book on

the psychology of C. G. Jung. Hans Castorp's glimpse of the reconciliation between the two forms of life has all the hall-marks of a dream: upon awakening the dreamer has only a dim recollection of the dream and no clear memory of its significance. In the figure of Joseph, however, Thomas Mann described a man to whom the two forms of life are no longer in conflict. To Joseph their incompatibility is not a source of conflict, but a source of extraordinary strength. Joseph's ability to reconcile them must not, however, be mistaken for a synthesis, for a simple reconciliation of opposites. The opposites remain opposites, but to Joseph there is no conflict because he is equally at home in both forms of life. The various and diverse adventures of his life have acquainted him with both and his superior intelligence taught him to adopt an attitude of detachment from both. The result is that he himself is not committed to either form and can view the panorama of human life with good-natured humour and irony. At the same time, his detachment enables him to be unselfishly sympathetic to other people who are committed to one form or the other. He understands their troubles and is able to guide them and advise them. The others, in turn, trust him and love him and the irony and detachment of Joseph do not lead, as one might have suspected, to indolence and indifference, but to a genuine ability to help and love others. The clue to Joseph's serenity and calm confidence is his familiarity with both forms of life. It is probably no accident that Thomas Mann has chosen the old Jewish story of Joseph and his brothers for developing his ideas. He sees in Joseph's noncommittal, ironical and confident serenity something that is of the essence of Judaism.

Although in his Joseph novels, Thomas Mann has explored the possibility of transcending the conflict, he has remained throughout his life vitally interested in the exploration of the conflict itself; and the pattern of that conflict, as I shall attempt to show, has proved in his hands a most fertile device for the discovery of all manner of connections and relationships.

In his first novel, *Buddenbrooks*, the theme is treated in a very simple and straightforward fashion. The novel concerns the gradual decline of a family, much like Mann's own family in Lübeck. In the last generation of the house there are two brothers—one who, after toying briefly with a few minor intellectual investigations, returns to his life of duty to take over the family business. But his early meanderings have left one trace: he married a foreigner, a deeply sensitive and musical woman. This woman and the son of the marriage are a constant reminder to Thomas that all is not well with his own life and dedication. There is a pathetic scene

when towards the end of his life, Thomas happens to alight on a volume of Schopenhauer, and picking it up reads with avid interest about all the problems that he wants to know about. The other brother breaks away from family tradition. But lacking real intellect or sensitivity, he becomes a crank, to return from travels in exotic lands to a dull life without purpose in his home-town.

After the first world war, Thomas Mann took up the theme in *The Magic Mountain*. Here the story becomes much more complicated. The hero, a young German, travels to a Swiss sanatorium to visit his sick cousin. As it happens, he lingers on and catches a mild form of TB himself. With the illness his ties to his job in Germany are loosened and he has the opportunity of exploring the problem of life. Significantly, he can do this only when he is sick. As a healthy man, his sense of obligation is too strong to be set aside. Paradoxically enough, only disease gives him the courage to explore the realities of life; in good health he was confined to duty.

As a sick man he comes under the influence of the representatives of the two kinds of life. On one side there is Settembrini, the educated and intelligent Italian liberal; and on the other, a Jew who has been converted to Catholicism and become a Jesuit, the protagonist of the dark, demonic forces of life. The climax of the fight for the soul of the young man is reached when Settembrini and the Jesuit decide to fight a duel: significantly, the liberal shoots in the air, because he cannot kill; and the Jesuit (at heart in love with death and self-destructive), at the same moment, does not aim at Settembrini but at himself and commits suicide.

In the thirties there followed Mann's book about Goethe. This was a daring undertaking, for a novel about a well-known man like Goethe was likely to be a failure. But Mann's grasp of his problem was so certain that he carried it off. In this novel, *Lotte in Weimar*, Goethe is seen as the man of superior intellect and genius, surrounded by a large number of less gifted, but quite intelligent men and women. He exploits each one of them and makes use of them in the most ruthless fashion. They are all treated by him as so many beings to be sacrificed for his own supreme art. The emotional carnage is truly terrifying; and the reader cannot but sympathize with the victims. But Goethe remains unconcerned to the last page on which he finally explains that, for the sake of his art, he has sacrificed not only other people but himself. The book concludes with Goethe's paean on the creative life: art is created through transformation, through metamorphosis.

After the second world war Thomas Mann published his last great novel, *Dr Faustus*. The theme is still the same. But this time it is treated in a much more complicated plot and the conflict between the two modes of life is presented in an uncanny manner and a quite tantalizing agony at the hopelessness of any kind of reconciliation. The basic plot is taken from the story of Faust and as can be readily imagined, the demonic life of spiritual adventure here takes the form of a life under a pact with the devil. But Thomas Mann goes further than that. In this novel he links the artist's life with a number of circumstances and forms which, on the face of it, have no obvious connection with it—at least they had no obvious connection with it to me until Mann drew my attention to it. His hero, to begin with, as one might have expected, is again a sick man. Thomas Mann is certain that the freedom of the artist and the creative life (creative in the sense of being a life of unrestricted exploration) is somehow connected with sickness. The healthy man cannot take the liberties necessary for such adventures. But then there are other associations: there is the Gothic background of the German middle ages; there is the spirit of music as the most unrestrained and demonic of human creations; there is Lutheran theology; and, last but not least, the exploration of the deepest and weirdest layers of ocean life. The hero, following up all these associations and having made his pact with the devil, pursues a restless course of creative activity which finally leads him to the production of a monstrously intricate oratorio. He has made use of all his friends; he has become incapable of love; he has denied his obligations to society; and when his masterpiece is completed, he finds that nobody really likes it, although everybody stands in awe of it. Or should one rather say, that by this time he finds nothing at all, for he has become completely demented and finishes his life as a mental defective. The story is told with extraordinary literary skill and makes an enormous impact upon the reader, who is at once repelled by the enormity of the hero's spiritual ruthlessness, his lack of humility, his refusal to content himself with what is attainable by mortals; and deeply sympathetic with the hero's quest for the unknown, which reveals itself, in fact, as the unknowable: the deeper the hero descends into it, the more bottomless the abyss of pure sound and of mathematical equations turns out to be.

One might almost wonder whether there is a hint of integration between the two lives in this novel. Or, if not integration, perhaps a hint that it is, after all, possible to judge. For the story itself, in the novel, is told by one of the hero's greatest admirers and life-

long friends who intersperses his narrative with long reflections on the course of his friend's life. The narrator is a humanist: a kindly school-teacher, a classical scholar—a man who loves his wife and his children and who suffers deeply at the cold manner with which his friend exploits him. But he does not stand in judgment: he watches with sorrow and sympathy from the safe distance of his measured life, shaking his head and yet appreciating the vitality of the quest. As he is writing in the thirties and early forties of this century, the horrors of Nazism are related simultaneously with the spiritual adventures of the hero. The horrors of Nazism exhibit the same unbridled *hubris* as the life of the hero; the refusal to content oneself with a measured and safe security, the refusal to prize peace and communal happiness over and above heroism and the pride of self-assertion. The liberties taken by the hero cannot be excused; but because of his unusual intellectual powers they are an object of wonder. The same liberties taken by Hitler's Germany are an object of revulsion. In the end, the complete insanity of the hero coincides with the wholesale destruction of German cities and the end of the Hitler régime, both the obvious and necessary result of a pact with the Devil.

Thomas Mann's stories have travelled a long way from the simple initial theme: his decision to break with the patrician mode of life. And yet, they are all explorations and interpretations of that theme, in different keys and on different levels. But I am sure that, as an artist, Thomas Mann would like it to be stressed again and again that this was an exploration in thought and in imagination, not an unbridled adventure and an opportunity for taking liberties. His personal life was one of measured discipline. What is remarkable, however, and what may serve as a general reflection in conclusion, is the way in which a simple theme lends itself to interpretation and reinterpretation. One would add little to wisdom if one could demonstrate only that this theme is the key to Mann's works. To state this would be to state a platitude. What is remarkable is the variety of interpretations he put on that theme. It is to be feared that the psychological habits of modern literary criticism, will seize precisely on that platitudinous point, even as Orson Welles maintained that the clue to Citizen Kane's life was the word 'rosebud' that had been written on the sleigh with which he used to play when a child. As against this, one might almost go to the opposite extreme and say that, once the interpretations and explorations of the original theme have been begun, the theme itself may be discarded: it is of no greater interest than the bottles in which we buy our wine.

I would like to explain this matter in greater detail. Thomas Mann's novels are full of all sorts of pieces of knowledge. He has observed certain connections between freedom, licence and sickness; he tells us of sickness as a very special, by no means undesirable, form of life; he draws our attention to the lure of death and the dangers that beset our path if we follow this lure; he has explored the limitations of rationalism and the immorality that is implied in any attempt to go beyond these limitations; he has become aware of the fragmentariness of life and of the fact that we are in debt, that we are guilty of something, and that we stand in need of some justification, of some grace. In his works there are profound reflections on Hellenism, on Judaism, on the nature of mythology and the effects of Lutheranism. He never preaches; but there are speculations, warnings, hints and suggestions on all manner of things. The question which immediately must arise, therefore, is, how does he arrive at such knowledge?

It is fairly obvious that he cannot have reached his insights by reliance on authority; and it is equally obvious that he did not use any kind of deductive reasoning. Nor did he generalize inductively from a mass of observed data. One might say that he used his intuition. But to say this is to say no more than that we do not know how he arrived at his conclusions, for intuition is a nebulous concept. An analysis of the structure of his novels will reveal, however, that he had a very definite and clear method of arriving at his knowledge. The method he employed is by no means new; and one might argue, in fact, that it is perhaps the oldest of all methods, much older than any of the other methods referred to.

Thomas Mann began with his theme. He introduced that theme into the pictures of life which he saw around himself, even as one might introduce a magnet into an old junk-heap. His theme performed in fact the function of a magnet: when he introduced it, a large number of facts and events suddenly ordered themselves around his original theme. And when he extricated the magnet from the junk-heap, it had lost much of its original shape and had assumed a new shape, for a large number of facts that had hitherto been unconnected, had clung to it.

The original theme as it has been described above, was Thomas Mann's personal experience of the incompatibility of the two forms of life. Whenever he introduced it into a complex situation, such as life in a Swiss sanatorium, or the friendship of two temperamentally totally disparate characters, he made a large number of astonishing discoveries. He found, for instance, that the simple pattern of the two irreconcilable ways of life revealed, when used

as a principle to order the manifold aspects of sanatorium life, certain connections between disease and the ability to contemplate life from the vantage point of the non-participant. He saw how disease bestows a freedom and lack of responsibility which opens vistas that remain hidden to the person who is exclusively occupied with becoming healthy. And conversely, he found that there is a connection between the desire to be healthy and the life of society in which every one of us is only a small cog fulfilling a limited function—which, if it is not fulfilled, makes it impossible for the wheels of society to turn smoothly and to provide that order and those material goods without which life becomes altogether impossible. The same pattern, introduced into a different situation, revealed different connections to him and it would be tedious to give further lengthy examples.

The important matter is Thomas Mann's method of exploration and discovery. It is very old and was first fully elaborated by Origen, the great Alexandrian philosopher. But it was used even before him and has since then been used by countless writers. The basic principle is this. One seizes upon a certain pattern of events which strikes one as particularly significant and imposes it upon a story or collection of facts. The story, seen through the pattern, will then not only acquire in very rough and general outlines the same pattern; but, observed closely, will also reveal features and relationships between its single parts which are quite new, in the sense that they had not been part of the original pattern that was imposed upon the facts.

The classical examples of the method are to be found, of course, in Biblical exegesis. In such exegesis a story is seized upon and superimposed on a completely different story. To take an example: the pattern of the story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac is superimposed upon the story of the death of Jesus. When this is done the second story, which had seemed a senseless and insignificant event to many a Roman observer, assumes a very definite shape. In outline it bears a similarity, an isomorphism, to the first story. But in itself, it is an entirely new story in that it exhibits relationships and meanings which had not been present in the original story. The story of Abraham's sacrifice was the story of a father's willing sacrifice of his only son for the sake of the love of God. When superimposed upon the story of Jesus's death on the cross, the latter story acquires significance. Its irrelevant features recede into the background and the relevant features, i.e. the willingness of the sacrifice; the enormity of God, the Father, sacrificing His only Son, etc., stand out in clear relief. In this method of discovery,

the first story is called the type of the second story and the second story is called the anti-type of the first story. The most remarkable feature of this form of exploration is, however, the fact that the two stories, although isomorphous, are not really alike. With the help of the first story it is possible to bring out quite new features in the second story. If it were only a matter of comparison, of tracing likenesses in a number of different stories, the method would not be very fruitful, for it would never lead to new discoveries. It would never reveal more than certain likenesses and would be a dull and uninformative procedure.

We might say that Thomas Mann used his initial experience of the two irreconcilable forms of life as a type and that with the help of that type he discovered a very large number of anti-types. The remarkable thing in this method of exploration is the fact that the type itself is the least important story of all. What is important are the anti-types, for the anti-types he has described have shown his readers connections and correlations of which they were either not at all or only dimly aware. In this way he has added to our knowledge of other people and of ourselves.

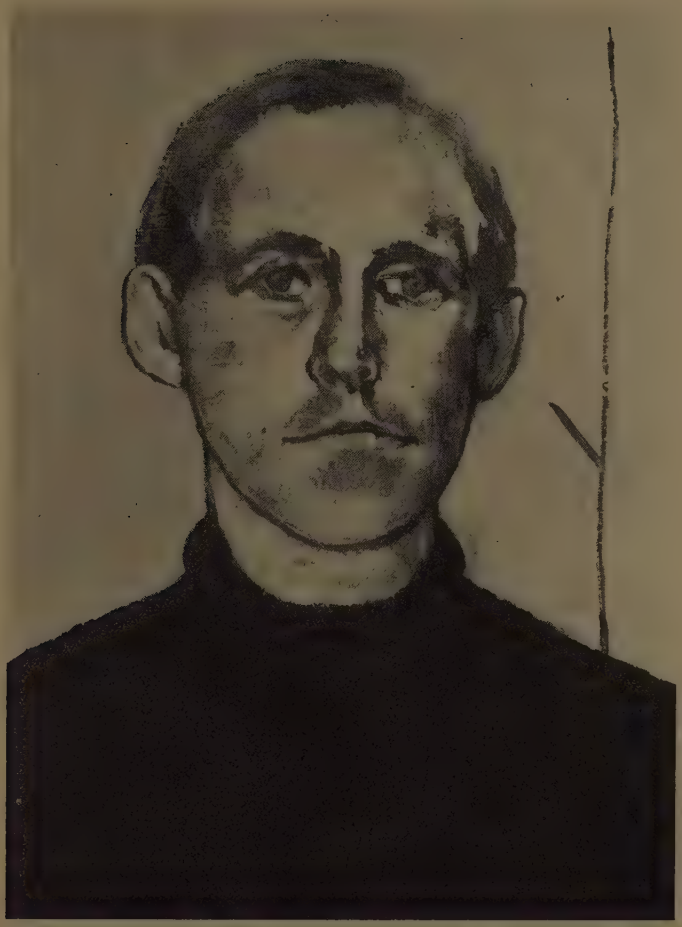
This method, though often employed, is today hardly ever advocated openly. The reason is not far to seek. In the hands of professional theologians and psychologists, the method, coupled with an untenable hypothesis, has become a tool of dogmatism and has yielded results that must be regarded with extreme scepticism by the intelligent and the alert. The hypothesis—an untenable one, it seems to me—is this: there is a causal connection between type and anti-type. To the theologian that causal connection consists in the hand of God which ordered events in such a way that one set foreshadowed another so that the type could be considered as the guarantee that the anti-type would happen. It is not that the type was considered the cause of the anti-type; but that both type and anti-type were considered as due to the same cause. Hence a flood of unwarranted speculation and prophecy, for it was believed that once the type was there, the anti-type had, of necessity, to occur.

To the psychologist, the causal connection was interpreted as some kind of compulsory activity. It functioned inwardly. A person is believed to behave and feel and think in terms of one or two basic patterns. The psychologist's task is to unravel these patterns and to show that most of the other things a person does are simply so many complicated variations of the same pattern. For good reasons, and sometimes for bad reasons, a person is supposed to wish to hide from both himself and others the operation of the basic

pattern and therefore goes to extraordinary trouble to disguise and cloak this pattern. The anti-types are thus seen as symbols of the types; as so many veiled and indirect expressions of the types. To reach true understanding it is necessary to strip a person of his anti-types and to show him up for what he really is. One may presume that in the eyes of the theologian, Thomas Mann's complicated treatment of his original theme in *Dr Faustus*, was merely an attempt to furnish his readers with a cipher or symbol that would help them to understand the original theme. And similarly, one suspects that to the psychologist, the complicated variations on the original theme are so many elaborate attempts to hide the basic truth, the tragedy of the *bourgeois manqué*. Both the theologian and the psychologist would wish to decipher the variations, i.e. treat them as mere hints of a basic truth.

The misuse of the method by theologians and psychologists has helped to discredit it in the eyes of reasonable people; although it is only fair to add that these reasonable people are more often shocked by the theological misuse of the method than by the psychological misuse of it. For this reason it is all the more important that we should learn attentively from the genuine practitioners of the method, such as Thomas Mann, and admire them for the sensible use they have made of it. There is no reason for abandoning the method because neither psychologists nor theologians can be trusted with it. Used sensibly, i.e. without the untenable hypothesis, the method is simply an empirical device for the enlargement of our knowledge of how things hang together and of how they ought to be connected with each other.

The novels of Thomas Mann have proved once more how useful and indispensable the method is, when freed of all dogmatic encumbrances. Without this method Mann would have been obliged, like so many other writers, to confine himself to writing up his own personal experiences or those of his friends. There is no doubt that this kind of reporting of one's own or other people's experiences ('carrying a mirror along the highway of life', Stendhal called it) has resulted in much first-rate writing. But Thomas Mann, it should be stressed, was not a reporter of the manifoldness of human experiences. He was an explorer of the deeper and ever deeper layers that were hidden beneath one single kind of experience. His greatness lies in the exploration of the single theme and not in the description of the ever-differing diversities of human life.



18 in x 12½ in

WILLIAM CULBERT. John (*Oil, 1955*)

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY 17½ in. x 13⅛ in.

GABRIELLE HOPE. Colin (*Ink, 1953*)

18⅞ in. x 13⅞ in.

GABRIELLE HOPE. Just Roses (*Ink, 1954*)

32 in. x 34 in.

JOHN HOLMWOOD. Whangamomona Country (*Oil, 1953*)

REWI ALLEY

# *Yangtsze Gorges*

BOYHOOD'S dreams that carried one
up the Yangtsze Gorges in Spring;
first of all the places one would go
to be amongst the magnificence there;

> and now, as I type, is springtime
> the waters are clear; the hills
> in blue; trackers lie against
> ropes pulling their boats forward
> as our busy steamship hustles
> down through the gorges;

sheer beauty
then in one moment
a swift touch of nature's cruelty;
a sudden storm
shouts from a passing boat
one long oar flashing
as it rides the rapids alone
one lonely figure
pulling itself out of the waters
up on a rock; of the boat
and of the others
no sign;
only the waves lifting
and breaking at the feet
of the man on the stone
as though still trying
to take him back;
a reminder that for the people
livelihood means struggle
and the price in risk
must be paid;

> 'they were not awake enough!
> the high wind caught them!'

this
their only epitaph;

and on the passenger deck
the amplifier tells
of those who would wage
atomic war; of meetings
petitions, of the need
for widespread understanding;

and the tall mountains
look down
as though bowing their heads
in requiem.

BASIL DOWLING

## *Two Poems*

### THE CHIMNEY SWEEP

A LIVELY blackamoor, with startling eye,
Beloved of children or their butt,
He ranges, loudly crying his long 'Sweep!'
Clothed in his livery of soot.

The furniture rolled back, floors paper-strewn,
He's nimbly busy at the hearth:
The acrid shower descending as he works
Puffs out the grimy tent of cloth.

Rattling and linking his light sheaf of rods
He twirls and pushes up and up.
Outside, a passer sees a strange jackdaw
Flutter upon the chimney top.

## THE WHITE CORNELIAN

'As he (John Keats) lay quietly waiting for the end, he held tightly in his hand a white cornelian, "the gift of his widowed love".'

I COULD see five church towers from that cliff
On a clear day, tall and standing up square
Among their grassy histories and graves;
And three miles south, toward Norwich, on a bare
High headland was a lighthouse, straight and stiff
In candy colours. Northward, above the waves
Cromer rose like a fortress; Paston inland
Had wheatfields for its sea and tawny sand.

This I remember, but the beach still more,
Dry, or darkened with tidal wash, and shingled;
And most of all, the fine stones I found there,
And one pale water-worn cornelian
The children found, from all the rest I singled
And now muse sadly on; for such a stone
Dying John Keats held once in his hot hand
Where sick mortality and love's despair
In that last grip were grievously commingled.

# COMMENTARIES

W. J. SCOTT

# *Civil Liberties in New Zealand*

IN 1952 the New Zealand Council for Civil Liberties was formed in Wellington, and a year or so later the Canterbury Council for Civil Liberties in Christchurch. The immediate stimulus was the Police Offences Amendment Act of 1951 and the widespread and to some extent successful protests against some of the clauses in the original Bill. In the constitution of each of the Councils the aims are set down as follows: 'to assist in the maintenance of civil liberties, including freedom of speech and assembly; to advance measures for the recovery and enlargement of such liberties; and

to take such steps as it may deem necessary to attain these ends.' My purpose in this article is to report what we have discovered about the state of civil liberties in this country while we have been, in a very modest way, pursuing these aims.

All laws, it has been said, abridge freedom; it is certainly true that every one of the many changes made during recent years in the laws that are the special concern of the Council has been an abridgement. Especially from the Public Safety Conservation Act 1932 down to the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1954 there has been a steady strengthening of the powers of the government at the expense of the rights of the individual and associations of individuals. The Public Safety Conservation Act is the one that enables the government to proclaim a state of emergency 'if . . . any circumstances exist, or are likely to come into existence, whereby the public safety or public order is or is likely to be imperilled'; and to make all such regulations 'as are required for the conservation of public safety and order and for securing the essentials of life to the community'. Passed as a result of the disturbances of the depression, this Act was based on the British Emergency Powers Act 1920, but lacks some of the safeguards of existing rights that the latter expressly provides. The most important of these in our opinion is that Parliament, if not in session, must be called within five days and any regulations made under the Emergency Powers Act approved within seven days. The New Zealand Act merely provides that, if Parliament is not then in session, the occasion of the Proclamation 'shall be communicated to it within fourteen days of the next ensuing session' and that any regulations so made 'shall be laid before Parliament as soon as may be after they are made'.

The consequences of this difference were painfully apparent during the 1951 waterfront dispute. The Emergency Regulations—the harshest ever imposed on a British country in time of peace—were issued by Order in Council several weeks before Parliament was due to meet. No one who wished to protest against their imposition or harshness had any means of doing so and public discussion of the dispute itself virtually ceased. It is improbable that, if our Act had contained the provision to call Parliament, much criticism of the Regulations would have come from the Opposition at that time; but there would probably have been some, enough to set off more in the community at large. At any rate it is a democratic essential that the assumption of extraordinary powers by the government should be immediately subjected to close scrutiny and open debate by the elected representatives of the people. The Emergency Regu-

lations made by the government of Great Britain in 1939 were strongly criticized by Parliament and as a consequence modified in some important respects; this was certainly due, in part at least, to the requirement to table the regulations within five days.

It was under the Public Safety Conservation Act that the Labour Government made its Proclamation of Emergency in 1939 and issued its war-time Emergency Regulations. These defined subversion in very wide terms, banned strikes, restricted the holding of meetings and processions, and greatly extended the powers of the police to prohibit meetings and processions and search premises for subversive persons or matter. They were much more severe than the corresponding British ones mentioned above, and a group of Wellington citizens headed by Bishop St Barbe Holland (J. C. Beaglehole, the present President of the New Zealand Council for Civil Liberties, and I, the present Chairman of the Executive Committee, were among them) unsuccessfully tried to persuade Mr Fraser to modify their harsher clauses. They were, of course, repealed shortly after the war, but in 1951 were used again in substantially the same form, this time by the National Government, to deal with a peace-time industrial dispute. Then, following its big victory in the special election fought on its handling of the dispute, the same government attempted to incorporate many of these drastic regulations in the statute law through the Police Offences Amendment Bill. In spite of the fifty amendments to the twenty-three clauses accepted by the government under public pressure we regard the Act that was finally passed as an unwarranted extension of powers already adequately possessed under existing Acts, mainly the Crimes Act 1908. Among the more objectionable provisions of Part I of the Act are these two: It empowers the police to enter any premises, and seize any printing press or other property that they suspect is being used for a seditious purpose and hold it for two months without any redress; and it reduces the penalty for sedition from two years in prison (Crimes Act, Section 119) to three months or a fine not exceeding £100. Sedition has thus become a minor crime dealt with summarily by a magistrate and unable, therefore, to come before a jury. The change no doubt makes it easier for a government to dispose swiftly of offenders but it deprives citizens of a traditional right that is particularly important in this kind of charge.

The general effect of the Act, both Part I and Part II, which forbids publications, picketing, processions and demonstrations likely to incite or prolong strikes or lockouts, is to give much greater powers to the police. In matters affecting the liberties of the sub-

ject this seems to us always a bad thing to do. In our opinion it is dangerous to freedom of expression for the police to have the power, for example, to seize a printing press and hold it for two months without necessarily bringing any charge against anyone for his use of it, or to prohibit a procession that in their opinion is likely to incite or prolong a strike or a lockout. We have made various efforts to persuade the leaders of the parties, members of Parliament, and the public that such extensions of power have seriously abridged traditional liberties, but so far have met with little success.

To illustrate how difficult it now is for citizens in a minority to exercise the traditional right to present a case to the people by peaceful public demonstration let me give a short account of the two procession cases we have been concerned with. In October, 1952, the Christian Pacifist Society was refused a permit by the City Council to hold a poster parade through the streets of Wellington. When the Secretary of the Society, Mr A. C. Barrington, referred the matter to us, we tried to find out from the Council why the permit had been refused and on what grounds generally permits were granted or refused, pointing out that there was an important principle at stake—the right of citizens to a reasonable explanation for the exercise of authority over them. In spite of persistent efforts we could get no other reply than that 'each application was considered on its merits, taking into account the circumstances prevailing at the time'. A long interchange of letters culminated in the Mayor's refusal to receive a deputation to discuss the question. We then wrote a letter to the *Evening Post* and later to the *Dominion* describing the City Council's determined evasion of the question and stating that citizens ought to know how a matter of great importance had been treated by their representatives. The editor of the *Post* would not publish it, but in 'Answers to Correspondents' published the Mayor's comment on it. In this he said: 'The Council does not feel it is necessary to advance reasons for every refusal. To do so just invites what may be endless controversy, which is so often desired by those whose requests are not acceded to.' The editor of the *Dominion* published the letter with some excisions that weakened it and a footnote that read: 'The Mayor declined to comment'. To complete the story I must add that a few days before the Mayor refused to receive the deputation, the Council granted a permit to the Wellington District Peace Council to hold a Ban-the-H-bomb parade. It is fair, I think, to describe the behaviour of the Mayor and his Council as arbitrary and unreasonable.

In the case I have just described our concern was with the reasons for denying a traditional right to a group of citizens; in the one I come to now it was with the question of whether or not a permit could be legally demanded at all. Four members of the Wellington District Peace Council who conducted another, unofficial, Ban-the-H-bomb procession were charged with the offence of taking part in a procession without a permit. Mr N. R. Taylor, counsel for the defendants, argued that the by-law requiring a permit was ultra vires and repugnant to the right long established in common law to use the public highway for a peaceful demonstration. In a carefully prepared and argued judgment, however, the magistrate, Mr J. R. Drummond, rejected these submissions, found the defendants guilty and fined them £2 each. Mr Taylor's analysis of the present legal position is that the judgment known as Haizeldon v. McAra increases the power of municipal bodies to prohibit assemblies in public places and that a 1949 amendment to the by-law enlarging the powers of municipal corporations pretty well clinched the matter. The slight uncertainty that still exists can, in his opinion, be cleared away only by the Appeal Court, in which at some stage the Haizeldon v. McAra judgment must be challenged. In the meantime the odds are heavily against those who try to exercise a right to conduct a procession or hold an assembly in a public place without a permit.

In every field of civil liberties that we have explored or had brought to our notice we have found that the same kind of abridgement has been steadily going on. Here are some examples: 1. A naturalized New Zealand citizen is required under the Immigration Restriction Act 1920 to procure a re-entry permit before he leaves the country for a visit abroad. (The Minister of Immigration has promised to have this provision deleted in the forthcoming amended Act, but he apparently intends to make it mandatory still for naturalized citizens from other parts of the Commonwealth to have entry permits.) 2. A teacher who was in a detention camp for military defaulters during the 1939-45 war and was released on parole is *still* classed as a defaulter and cannot teach in a state school. (There is no law here, only—in Mr Algie's words—'a decision taken at the highest level' and apparently to be more reverently regarded than any law. It is grossly unjust. Several men classed as military defaulters teach unchallenged in university colleges and private schools, and a number of others who would have been military defaulters if they had been called up before teaching was declared an essential occupation have continued to teach unchallenged in the state schools. Partly through

the efforts of our members, the New Zealand Educational Institute has resolved to press for the lifting of this ban.) 3. A worker is compelled by the law of the state to join a union—a compulsion that in effect abolishes the right of unions to choose their form of registration. (Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1954.)[1] 4. Government control of broadcasting is used to deny minority parties, acting perfectly legally and constitutionally, the right to express their views and reply to their critics.

As the liberties of the individual are diminished in such legal or arbitrary ways as I have been describing, the permit and the file—twin instruments of the state's increasing control over its citizens—become more intrusive and pervasive. A set of files that must exercise the minds of defenders of civil liberties is that in which the Security Police record the activities of persons of doubtful loyalty. It is, of course, difficult to discuss the work of this branch of the police force with any certainty, because first-hand evidence is naturally hard to come by. But we can be quite sure that its officers have files for most people who are or have been active radicals in politics in its widest sense, and that since the information they contain is compiled by politically naive and uneducated people it is likely to be dangerously inaccurate. It would be interesting to know, for instance, what was the nature of the additions made to the files of those present at the inaugural meeting of the New Zealand Council for Civil Liberties by the two officers of the Security Police who were also present.

The following account of a case we handled in 1954 will show how foreign to our way of life is this secret inquiry into the beliefs and characters of citizens.

A young man of about twenty, a part-time student at the university, lost his job with a firm of accountants shortly after an officer of the Special Branch had visited his employers to ask questions about his political activities. He was at the time helping to run off and distribute a cyclostyled journal called *Newsquote*, which consisted largely of quotations from reputable British and American papers chosen because they threw a favourable light on Soviet foreign policy. The results of our interview with his employers were unsatisfactory, to say the least: 'The sergeant said he was looking for the real source of *Newsquote*, which wasn't the few lads printing and distributing it. He did not say A— was a communist; in fact, he said he didn't want to prejudice his employment in any way. We would have got rid of A—

[1] For additional deprivations see Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, Part X, especially Section 195.

in any case because his work wasn't good enough; his mind was filled with thoughts of his political interests.' Told that A— was severing his connection with *Newsquote*, they said they couldn't consider taking him on again; it would not do for a firm that handled the confidential material of some very large concerns to be known to employ a person who was tainted. They added in response to a question about another job, that if a prospective employer made inquiries about A— they would probably feel that they had to tell him about his (A's) political interests. From this account, which is as accurate as my notes and memory can make it, these facts emerge: An officer of the Special Branch questioned a man's employers about his political and other interests; the man lost his job; he could expect hindrance rather than help from his former employers in making a career for himself in his chosen profession.

It will be remembered that last year (June 30) the Prime Minister publicly refused the Communist Party's request for a Royal Commission to inquire into the activities and methods of the Special Branch. *The People's Voice* had just published the affidavit of H. T. Guy, witnessed by a Justice of the Peace, which purported to describe his experiences as a police informer and the methods that he alleged were used by officers of the Special Branch to obtain information from and about him and others. If what he said is true, these methods are unsavoury; they include the use of paid informers, secret surveillance of political and trade union activity, and even the collection of information about the domestic affairs of people considered to be or likely to become subversive. There can be no justification for their use in this liberal-democratic state. In his press statement refusing the request Mr Holland neither admitted nor denied the allegations made in the Guy affidavit. Instead, after stating that there were many overseas examples of communists like Guy who had given information to the police about the activities of their associates, he declared: 'I cannot say that I deplore it in this country if it assists in the campaign against subversion.'

Both the Canterbury Council and the New Zealand Council have protested strongly against this reply as a disturbingly improper one for the head of a democratic state to make.[2] Being non-party and non-denominational they hold no brief for the Communist Party any more than for any other party, right, centre or left, but they

[2] See pamphlet 'Subversive Activity' published by the New Zealand Council for Civil Liberties (obtainable from the Secretary, P.O. Box 337, Wellington).

insist that the case it has presented needs a more reasonable and honest answer than this. Mr Holland has often emphasized the necessity of stamping out subversion (i.e., sedition). The only evidence of sedition acceptable under our system of government is what the courts provide, since they are our only judges of whether or not this or that man's activities are in fact seditious. Even with the extended definition of sedition in the Police Offences Amendment Act we have had no such evidence; moreover, we have had no assurance from Mr Holland that the Security Police ever unearth anything genuinely seditious. If his empty cry of 'wolf!' is indeed being combined with approval of the methods described above, his conduct is highly reprehensible.

It has been the practice of recent governments, and especially Mr Holland's, to arm themselves with legal powers that they don't need or don't use directly. 'Decent and law-abiding citizens' are assured that they have 'nothing to fear', that the powers are there to be used if need be against the 'subversive' or 'indecent' minority. The use being made of the Indecent Publications Act 1954 by the Attorney-General at the moment seems to be an instance of this practice. The amendments to the 1910 Act are aimed at adult and juvenile publications that 'unduly emphasize matters of sex, horror, crime, cruelty, or violence'. How this extension of the meaning of indecency is to be defined is for the courts to decide; but Mr Marshall and his officers, it would appear, are suggesting to booksellers and other distributors that certain publications undoubtedly come within the new definition and ought not to be offered for sale or hire. This behind-the-scenes operation of the Act is a form of coercion that is quite undemocratic. His motives, I am sure, are good; his methods are not.

In a country like New Zealand where no constitutional safeguards of civil liberties exist as they do in France or the United States, and Parliament is supreme, there is particular need for organizations like the Council for Civil Liberties that can help to influence the legislature. The need is perhaps greater in New Zealand than it is in Great Britain or Canada or Australia, because we are a very small community, so homogeneous in class, culture and outlook that the pressure to conform is exceptionally strong. I cannot pretend that the two Councils whose work I have been describing are large and influential bodies or that they have been able to accomplish much. But if my account of the state of civil liberties here is correct they have important work to do and deserve support accordingly.

BRUCE MASON

# *The Plays of Claude Evans*

I COME to review the plays of Claude Evans with some embarrassment. I am a practising playwright myself, and it seems to me no more ethical to criticize the work of a colleague in this field than in other professions, say medicine or law. The proper person for this task is the professional dramatic critic, but we are not yet sufficiently persuaded that this is a noble calling, nor is there a body of work large enough to occupy him. Until the critic's profession is both honoured and highly paid, poets will continue to review poetry and playwrights plays. At least I have the advantage, not always available to amateur critics, of not being Mr Evans's closest friend.

The Pegasus Press has now published six of Mr Evans's plays, a volume of four in 1950, one in 1952, and another last year.[1] This amounts therefore to a considerable body of work, and in a sparse field, Mr Evans must be considered New Zealand's most active playwright. The first thing that struck me about the volume of four plays is that nowhere is it evident from the texts that Mr Evans is living in New Zealand, nor that his plays have been presented to New Zealand audiences. I might remark here that all his plays have been presented publicly in Christchurch. They are set in Hereford, London, near London, and China, with excursions to Buckinghamshire. This interests me, because the plays I wrote in my teens also had their *mise-en-scène* in London, or within thirty miles of the metropolis. I should like to say that certainly, neither I, nor no doubt, Mr Evans, wrote our plays with our eyes firmly fixed on the London market. We may have had our dreams of sudden and dazzling success, but I think in our hearts we knew that if our plays were produced, they would be on the amateur stages of large New Zealand towns. The interesting fact is that not until 1952 did Mr Evans feel impelled to place a play in a New Zealand environment, and for me it was not until 1953 that I did likewise. Even then, Mr Evans does not give a setting more specific than 'a New Zealand town'; it is not until *Overtime* was produced in 1954 that the unequivocal label 'Christchurch' appears at the head of the first page. I understand this all too well. If I may here speak for Mr Evans too, we clearly felt when we began writing for the theatre, that there was not sufficient resonance in

[1] *Four Plays* (1950). *That Man Harlington* (1952). *Overtime* (1955).

the raw themes provided in our own land to make any sort of a play about them. One must, after all, be sure of whom one is writing for: paradoxically, it seemed easier for us to write about England, a consciousness of which was the one area of common experience we could assume in our audience, than about say, Christchurch, which could easily be esoteric in Wellington. We were not after all, Henrik Ibsens; we could not write a play about a tiny village in Norway and see it translated into every European language. But then Ibsen was a giant, and permitted by his talent to summarize an epoch, and I imagine that Mr Evans, certainly I, would make no such claim. And Norway after all, is a European country with its mists and legends, and centuries of life and experience are stored in it; here, there may be mists, but legends are few; there simply cannot be in one century of continuous occupation a sufficient body of raw experience which might be shaped into art. So I argued, so I take it, did Mr Evans. And yet we were hamstrung by this situation. For what would one imagine the plays of a young man to be like who had never been to England, yet wrote pieces purporting to say something of life in it, in entirely the same terms as native English dramatists? One would expect them to be awful hokum. Mine were, and I was advised to destroy them. I did. So are Mr Evans's English plays, but he has, unwisely in my view, elected to publish them. For though Mr Evans may know England well, he writes as though his knowledge of it were based on extensive reading rather than personal experience or profound feeling. Understand me, though: I am not suggesting that no one should write of a place unless he has personal experience of it: that would be absurd and would at once cut the ground of a great deal of literature from under our feet: what I am trying to point out is that for the purposes of communication in this country, Mr Evans, and I too, were forced to write our first plays in an English convention, because this was the only way in which we could convey what we had to say in dramatic form. It means that we were always writing about people that we did not know, and imaginatively we were not strong enough to make them real. I must nevertheless point out that Mr Evans shows in these four plays a command of the basic principles of play construction; he can write smooth, speakable dialogue, and he sometimes has a lively idea, such as the switch in time in *The Clock strikes the Hour*, and the consequences of the quest for eternal youth in *There'll be a Spring*. He grapples bravely with large abstractions like good and evil, judgment and redemption, and he believes in love, charity and compassion. He reveals a

lively intelligence and a good heart. But what he does not reveal is crucial as to whether these plays make sense, and that is a feeling for the persons of his dramas which can arouse our curiosity, and as the drama unfolds, in some way appease it; he does not, in a word, create *people*, but only verbal projections of certain aspects of himself. There is no character who seems to possess an independent existence, there are no *creatures* of his imagination, only animated dummies, who may appear human for a moment, but when you get close, stare at you with sightless eyes. He is also, I fear, a sucker for romantic tosh in the Ivor Novello manner, but I will say no more about that except to chide him gently again for not suppressing these plays and charging them up to experience. For there is no doubt in my mind from his latest published play *Overtime* that Mr Evans has a considerable talent.

Before I deal with *Overtime*, a word about his first New Zealand play, *That Man Harlington*. This play shows us the inside of a shady lawyer's office, though never the inside of his shady mind. We are at a loss to find out why he practises his chicaneries, and this should be, I feel, the substance of his play. The chief character besides Harlington, is Mrs Midgley, an eccentric client of considerable means. If she gets her comedy from rather obvious sources, Mrs Midgley is the first character Mr Evans has created who can interest us as a person. I confess, however, that the conclusion of the play baffled me. The lawyer, having embezzled his client's funds faces ruin, but is saved by Mrs Midgley from the grave. She leaves him ten thousand pounds, thus turning the play into a fairy tale, with the deceased client as Fairy Queen *ex machina*.

And so finally, to *Overtime*, now set firmly in Christchurch, New Zealand. This play is by far the best work Mr Evans has done, and I have been happy to learn of its great success in Christchurch. The thesis of *Overtime* is that we are living in a technological world where the craftsman is being crushed by the machine, and where the benevolent entrepreneur is being forced out of existence by militant unionism. His central character, Ted, is a craftsman of the old school, who has worked for fifty-three years in the same furniture factory, through two generations of owners, starting in 1900 with Blaxton senior, and working now under his son. The dilemma which Mr Evans poses to us is both real and clearly stated. Ted is a creator, a maker of things; as he movingly expresses it towards the end of the play '. . . if a man wants to get the best out of life there's only one way—and that's to create something real—and by real I mean that which has

truth. It might be an object you can handle like furniture or just an idea, but whatever it is must grow out of the work of an honest heart.' The craftsman, therefore, is a man who makes things, and these things he offers to the world as the fruit of his labour. But the machine does not make things, only parts of things, and what the modern machine operator offers to the world is his time, to be bought and sold like a commodity. This situation is brilliantly symbolized in the play by the scene in which Ted is attacked by his union and his mates for working at night without payment in order to finish a job. To the union, he is working overtime, which must be paid for according to the award; Ted's view is that he can't tell how long it will take him to finish a job, 'might be ten minutes, might be two hours'; he does not tick off the time spent, but sees in his mind's eye only the thing to be made. If Ted serves things and materials so as to learn their nature and create from them, his mates serve only time. This is the balance of forces in the play and very adroitly Mr Evans has handled them. The theme of time is used simultaneously on several levels. Times have changed, time marches on, there's no time for a good job these days, an accountant is brought in to reduce costs, and his first act is to institute time sheets, and then there is Mr Blaxton's own situation; nourished by his father in the tradition of things made rather than time served, yet forced now to cope with the changes due to technology and a new attitude to work, his marriage goes temporarily awry; he conducts a furtive affair with his secretary, and to explain his absences to his wife, tells her that he is working overtime, making a ludicrous parallel to Ted's perplexing choice on another level. All this is the stuff of good theatre.

Perhaps Mr Evans's greatest achievement in *Overtime* is to write a play which could be produced anywhere in New Zealand with equal success and relevance. His central theme has a universal application, and this alone raises it far above the mediocre. Yet I cannot consider *Overtime* wholly successful. For, as in all his other plays, Mr Evans himself appears throughout the action. He has not sought out the inner logic of his theme and gone with it; he has let us see everywhere just where he is standing. He has clearly identified himself with Ted and with the system of work inaugurated by the first Mr Blaxton. Mr Evans's hostility to his other protagonist, Simpson, foreman of the factory, is always evident and sometimes blatant. Simpson is a sly, treacherous man incapable of decency, whose every thought is ignoble. The union secretary is underhand and nasty, and some of the characters

on the fringe of the action are crude dummies. There is a disgraceful caricature of an immigrant which must be considered Mr Evans's attitude to foreign workers, and it is neither pleasant nor just. And when Ted is forced to resign, Mr Blaxton abdicates by selling out the business, and our only conclusion from the piece as a whole is that the tradition of craftsmanship is good and carries with it all the major virtues (Ted, for example, straightens out Mr Blaxton's emotional tangle) and that technology allied to militant unionism is bad and corrupting, something which men of good will can only wash their hands of. I suggest that this is nonsense. Mr Evans's play depends for its effect upon the spirited opposition of those who stand for craft, and those who stand for new techniques of production. Now, technology is with us to stay: it is foolish to imply that the machine is evil: evil resides in human hearts. Machines, as instruments, can be used well or ill. But one solves nothing by turning one's back and selling out, though Mr Evans would have us believe that this is the only course for Blaxton. It is not the only course. Ted is given every opportunity to discourse on the tradition which he represents, yet the union secretary, whose tradition is no less compelling and persuasive, is allowed no such opportunity. If Ted is animated by a passion for his craft, the union man could have had an equal passion for justice, and this opposition might have given us a splendid scene. But the mote in Mr Evans's eye prevents him from seeing this dialectic. He is on the side of the goodies, sits in the scales with them, so that the play is an unbalanced affair capable of convincing only those who are of Mr Evans's political and moral persuasions. I reject his pessimistic conclusions. What technology needs surely is the creative mind who will teach us to use the machine for our good: it will be a vastly different creativeness from the dedication of the solitary craftsman, and I would like to have seen hints of what might be achieved by a man of goodwill. But this is asking Mr Evans to write us another play.

It remains for me to praise Mr Evans again for his considerable skill. His dialogue is always smooth, sometimes neat, and in his Ted, Mr Evans has created one splendid character, the only one in his gallery who is a fully-rounded creation and speaks as it were, for himself. Ted is complete: earthy, cantankerous, touchy as an old dog at the end of his days, as ripe as old cider, as well-seasoned and solid as a panel of walnut. A fine part for an actor (the first and last test of the playwright's skill) and the man who played it in Christchurch must have enjoyed himself. Perhaps

what gives this character his vivid life is that Mr Evans plainly loves this old man. But it is the dramatist's duty to love all his characters, as God loves men; all must be equal before him whatever their sins, however unworthy. But Mr Evans will not so far fully accept this discipline; he must walk and talk among his people, peering at us over the scenery. His gifts prompt me to hope that he will write many more plays, but that in future, he will not appear in the dramatis personae.

# REVIEWS

KING DICK. A Biography of Richard John Seddon. R. M. Burdon. *Whitcombe and Tombs.* 17s. 6d.

SINCE James Drummond's panegyric, published in 1906, Richard John Seddon has become an almost legendary figure, beatified by his love for the common man and glorified by the social legislation with which he is associated. Mr Burdon's biography does the valuable dual service of adding an important work to our historical literature and of stimulating his readers to a revaluation of that hearty personification of welfare laws who dominated New Zealand politics from 1893 to 1906. It is a pleasure to read such a lively and lucid narrative as Mr Burdon presents, and *King Dick* is not only eminently readable and entertaining, but is also an essay in historical criticism.

That the book has its faults and limitations is to some extent the result of the magnitude of the task attempted. Had there been some specialized accounts of social and economic aspects of the Seddon era, some attempt to capture the temper of the times, on which Mr Burdon could have drawn, his task would have been easier and some of his conclusions perhaps less tentative. The bibliography indicates that much of the author's research has been spent in examination of primary sources, source material which lends authority to Mr Burdon's narrative of the earlier events of Seddon's life and gives his judgments a sound basis of fact. It is gratifying to see that the files of the *West Coast Times* and the *Grey River Argus* have been examined in the investigation of the years between 1866 and 1894. However it is unfortunate that the *Kumara Times*, whose files from 1877 to 1887 are still extant, has not been consulted. As Seddon began his political life in Kumara, where he resided from 1876 to 1895, examination of the *Kumara Times* might have cleared some of the obscurity which

surrounds his early political life. This newspaper, strong in its support of Seddon, certainly gave a more penetrating appraisal of Kumara politics and politicians than did the Hokitika newspaper on which Mr Burdon relies so heavily. Some of Mr Burdon's dates and facts relating to this early period do not coincide with those given in the *Kumara Times*. There is for instance, no mention in the *Kumara Times* of Seddon announcing himself as a radical in the course of the 1879 election campaign which ensured his entry into the House of Representatives. Mr Burdon's acceptance of Seddon's not well authenticated early radicalism colours the tone of much of his later comment.

Viewed as a whole, the book lacks balance in construction. To Seddon's excursions in imperialism Mr Burdon devotes seventy pages, which appears excessive when the Premier's relations with organized labour receive only twelve. Mr Burdon treats the Trades and Labour Councils as summarily as Seddon did himself. To brush aside these Councils as composed of 'naive Utopians' (p.267), is to distort their nature and to vastly underestimate their true importance. The Trades and Labour Council decision of 1904 to form an independent labour party is dismissed in half a page. Mr Burdon does not attempt to analyse the nature of the rising tide of unrest which plagued Seddon's later years. Not only does he fail to do justice to the dissentient right and left wings of the Premier's Liberal support, he ignores completely the presence of the Marxist socialist movement centering on the State Miners' Union, Runanga, formed in 1904. The edifice of Seddonist Liberalism was more in danger of collapse in 1904-6 than Mr Burdon indicates.

The tone of the biography appears reasonably impartial at first reading. It cannot be denied that the author presents Seddon's blunders and weaknesses frankly. But Mr Burdon is too quick to make excuses and too concerned with subtle vindication of his subject. Though it is admitted that Seddon's ethics were at times questionable and that 'power was the mistress to whom he paid undying devotion' (p.292), these sins were as nothing when seen in the light of his greatness and his 'love of humanity' (p.321). Mr Burdon might have been less convinced of Seddon's 'abounding goodwill towards the poor and weak' (p.302), and of his wish 'to protect the underdog' (p.299), had he examined the files of the *Grey River Argus* more carefully. In 1894, Seddon bluntly refused government help to unemployed on the Midland Railway (*G.R.A.* 24 March 1894) and in 1897 refused to help unemployed labourers on the grounds that they had had work for some considerable time and must therefore be reasonably well off (*G.R.A.* 6, 8 January 1897, *Canterbury Times* 14 January 1897). It was a commonplace that the government preferred to keep casual labourers who were paid less than permanents and could be dealt with easily (*G.R.A.* 24 January 1902). While private employers were compelled to pay labourers 10s. a day, the government labourers received 7s.

(*G.R.A.* 15 October 1900), and in 1902 government orders were issued to the effect that no young man under twenty-four years of age would be paid more than 4s. a day for ballasting work in the Westport district (*Greymouth Evening Star* 26 August 1902). To use Mr Burdon's own words, 'the sternest of Tories could scarcely have preached self-reliance in terms more downright' (p.95). Seddon's much publicized co-operative public works system was by no means the success Mr Burdon alleges, and the limited success it did have might be attributed more justly to scarcity and insecurity of employment than to any intrinsic merit of the scheme. The establishment of State coal mines was, as the author notes, to ensure a reduction of the price of coal to the private consumer. He neglects to mention that this intention was not fulfilled (*G.R.A.* 7 March, 7 July 1905), and that the opening of the State mine resulted in a severe depression in West Coast mining districts (*G.R.A.*, *G.E.S.* August 1904).

Mr Burdon perpetuates the Seddon legend when he persists in labelling 'King Dick' both a 'born radical' (p.35), and a 'confirmed radical' (p.246). It was no radical who accepted female enfranchisement with dismay, who was forced, without premeditation, to intervene in the Bank of New Zealand crisis of 1894, and who described the Auckland Liberal Association's programme as 'a very nice little pill' but 'not one that he could swallow'. The Old Age Pensions scheme for which Seddon is famous, was introduced just prior to the 1896 election as a vote-catching device when Liberal fortunes were low. As Mr Burdon notes, Seddon was not a man of vision. His radicalism, such as it was, was that of political expedience. Seddon's radical achievements, though by no means negligible, were basically political moves.

There can be no doubt that the common man supported Seddon. Mr Burdon does not, however, attempt any careful analysis of this support, which was, after all, the real basis of King Dick's dictatorship. The appeal of the Premier's personality, his political astuteness, and his amazing energy are obviously important in explaining how he elicited such constant support from the electorate. There are also more subtle factors. The rise in the level of prosperity which so assisted Seddon in his tenure of office was very limited. In 1900 for instance, government labourers working on railway construction received 7s. for a twelve hour day (*G.R.A.* 15 October 1900) and unemployment was widespread. Seddon could of course claim the betterment of economic conditions as his own doing, and the more unthinking were correspondingly grateful. Mr Burdon underestimates the extent of the dissatisfaction with Seddon's policy. The programmes of both the Liberal Associations (Mr Burdon's 'visionary radicals') and of the Trade and Labour Councils ('naive Utopians') show progressive demands among intelligent Liberal supporters which Seddon would never satisfy. A more sceptical analysis of Seddon's support than Mr

Burdon's would consider the fact that there was no alternative to Liberalism to claim the common man's support. Labour was unorganized politically and State controlled industrially, and therefore had to submit to the pace of Liberal reform. Until socialist labour had elected P. C. Webb for the Grey electorate in 1913, there was no progressive alternative to Liberalism.

Though the dust cover of *King Dick* states that the book contains 'the picture of an age', this is precisely what the work lacks. The absence of social and economic background essential for accurate appraisal of the significance of political events and forces is one of the biography's main limitations. The author cannot of course be criticized for not having written two books, one on Seddon and one on the Seddon period. It must be admitted that this deficiency of adequate background material is to some extent a reflection of the paucity of our historical literature and will no doubt afflict biographies for some time to come. At the same time, it is regrettable that Mr Burdon did not see fit to add a chapter outlining the main social and economic trends of the period.

Treatment of Seddon's relations with William Pember Reeves and John McKenzie is almost negligible. To dismiss Reeves as 'aloof, fastidious, not over tactful' (p.104), is to ignore Reeves's immense contribution to Seddon's Liberalism. In the opinion of Sir James Hight, Reeves 'provided the vision, the guidance, and much of the driving force of the greater part of the legislation of the Ballance and Seddon Governments'. Sir Anton Bertram, an observer in the Parliament of 1894-5, described him as 'the real brain of the Ministry' who 'probably understood better than any of his colleagues the real tendencies of their policy'. If these opinions are accepted, Mr Burdon has not only done Reeves a grave injustice, but magnified Seddon at the expense of his colleague.

Mr Burdon only hints at one of the most interesting aspects of Seddon's political importance, his role as the dictatorial party politician. During Seddon's premiership party discipline and stability both within the House and in the electorate achieved a permanence never known before. Seddon's great contribution to New Zealand's development was to give political stability for thirteen years, and that in a period of rising prosperity. His other major contribution, as Mr Burdon outlines acutely, was to democratize politics, not as a doctrinaire radical, but as the practical politician par excellence.

From Mr Burdon's vivid and concise statement of the facts of Seddon's political life, a much less favourable picture can be drawn than the author chooses to sketch. His non-committal attitudes, his studied endeavours to avoid condemnation, deprive his biography of an incisiveness and vitality which a little judicious debunking might have given it. Mr Burdon's achievement must not be minimized. His work is competent and certainly of considerable value to the general reader. Its generality will of course fail to

satisfy the student looking for more detailed treatment of various aspects of Seddon's premiership. The author's admiration of Seddon which permeates the whole book is one way, and the more orthodox way of regarding King Dick. There is also an excellent case for describing Seddon, in the words of the *Greymouth Evening Star*, 10 October 1904, as 'our champion opportunist'. To have raised this problem and many others in such an entertaining and lively narrative is Mr Burdon's achievement.

*P. J. O'Farrell*

ADVENTURE IN NEW ZEALAND. E. Jerningham Wakefield. Abridged and edited by Joan Stevens. *Whitcombe and Tombs*. 17s. 6d.

IN THE 1840's, when Edward Jerningham Wakefield published *Adventure in New Zealand*, nearly all books written about this country were designed to catch the eye of intending colonists, and the market for such books was so small that most authors sought the assistance (and accepted the censorship) of the New Zealand Company. This assistance was not forthcoming unless a book did one or both of two things—praised the Company's own settlements at Wellington, Nelson and New Plymouth, and abused the government settlement at Auckland.

*Adventure in New Zealand* may not have been subsidized by the New Zealand Company, but Wakefield's interest and his inclinations alike made him a fervent partisan. His father was the moving spirit of the Company, two of the Company's settlements in New Zealand were administered by his uncles, and all the Company's local officials were close friends of his family. The colonization of New Zealand was to be the final vindication of his father's ideas, and Jerningham Wakefield was associated with the enterprise from the start. He sailed in the *Tory* in 1839 with his uncle William, the Principal Agent of the New Zealand Company, and he was close to the centre of events for much of the four years he spent in New Zealand. He was a junior partner in a family firm and could be relied on to defend its actions.

For a young man in his early twenties who had not staked his future on emigration to New Zealand, colonization was an exciting game. Jerningham was always on the move, as land-purchaser, explorer, courier, and trader. He acted like a schoolboy on a ramble, and the role of defender of the Company's actions suited his style and his character. Brushes with representatives of the British Government were part of his adventures, and his naive and irresponsible criticism of everything that emanated from Auckland is as entertaining as his descriptions of his canoe journeys and dealings with the Maoris.

Wakefield was more effervescent than some of the settlers in

his condemnation of the local Government and the capital town, but his onesidedness was typical of most of them and was characteristic of the time. There was passionate rivalry between the inhabitants of the Company's settlements at Wellington, Nelson and New Plymouth, and the settlers and government officials of Auckland. This rivalry was the inevitable result of efforts by the Company and the Government to colonize the country more quickly than the supply of colonists from England warranted. All the early settlements were founded in the belief that their population would increase rapidly, and many men who bought land from the Company or the Government thought that they were establishing themselves in towns that would soon become cities. Elaborate town plans were drawn up for Wellington and Auckland, and one writer compared the size of New Plymouth with contemporary Birmingham.

These hopes of rapid and continuous expansion were soon disappointed. By 1845, when *Adventure in New Zealand* was published, four years of colonization had not brought the large influx of settlers and capital that had been expected. Many colonists had returned to England, especially from Wellington, where hopes had been highest and disappointment most acute, and many of those who were left trembled for the safety of their investments in the new country. The inhabitants of all settlements competed with each other in order to secure for themselves the largest possible share of the few people, especially those with money, who were coming to New Zealand from England and Australia. They did so by 'puffing up' their own settlements and 'blowing down' all others. The Company's colonists at Wellington, Nelson and New Plymouth detested the rivalry of the Governor's town at Auckland, but they were also rivals among themselves. The Principal Agent of the New Zealand Company had to advise his employers not to allow ships bound from England to New Plymouth to touch at Wellington on their way round the coast. When they did so, artful Wellingtonians persuaded the passengers to disembark at Wellington by telling them unnerving stories about the privations awaiting them at New Plymouth.

Wakefield spent most of his time at Wellington and its offshoot, Wanganui, but he visited and 'puffed up' all the Company's settlements. There is no sign in his book of the disappointment and failure that was the lot of so many of the Company's colonists, and no word of the growing dislike and distrust of the Company on the part of those who had been attracted to New Zealand by its bland promises of certain and easy success. Wakefield could not assure his English readers, as the Company tried to do for a long time, that everything was going according to plan. He did the next best thing by blaming Hobson and FitzRoy, the successive Governors of New Zealand.

For most of the time that Wakefield was in New Zealand, the

leaders of the Company's settlements were engaged in political warfare with the Governors over the policy to be pursued towards the Maoris; and the Company and its representatives claimed in public, though not necessarily in private, that Hobson and FitzRoy were directly responsible for all the ills of the Company settlements. However, the rivalry between Auckland and Wellington was the foundation of the political situation. Had Hobson come to Wellington (as the Company and its settlers had felt sure he would) and brought with him the colonists and the much-needed capital that followed him to Auckland, his other sins might have been forgiven him; and Wakefield would not have been able to display his talent for farce in describing the infrequent visits of government officials to Wellington.

*Adventure in New Zealand* is the extreme expression of the Company's policy of 'blame the Government', but it appeared when the Company was on its last legs and the book could do little immediate good to the cause. Its effect was to come later. Thanks mainly to Wakefield, most historians have seen Auckland and the early Governors through the eyes of the Company and its settlers. Early Auckland has a bad name, especially for land speculation, and it is assumed that the Company's settlements were free from this bane of all new colonies. Actually, systematic colonization as advocated by Edward Gibbon Wakefield could lead to considerable land and mercantile speculation, as was obvious in the early years of Wellington.

*Adventure in New Zealand* is, then, an example of how an historical legend is created; Miss Stevens's edition of the book shows how a legend is perpetuated. *Adventure in New Zealand* was, in its original form, too long and diffuse to be effective propaganda. By abridging it, Miss Stevens has produced the book that Wakefield should have written. She warns us in her brief introduction that Wakefield was a partisan, and there, to all intents and purposes, her editing—as distinct from her skilful abridging—comes to an end. This would not matter if the Government's and Auckland's side of the case was represented by a book as readable and accessible as this edition of *Adventure in New Zealand*. As this other side goes by default, it is surely incumbent on an editor to provide the reader with the information necessary to see the book in correct perspective.

Wakefield's descriptions of life in Wellington, Nelson and New Plymouth are the dullest part of the book, although he supplies many interesting details of life in early Wellington. The Wellingtonians, as opposed to the land-jobbers and quick-witted traders of Auckland, are nearly always laborious, undaunted, and uncomplaining. In reality, the economic life of early Wellington was almost as feverish and unstable as that of Auckland. 'Sons of noblemen and gentlemen,' wrote one Wellington colonist, 'wear fustian and sell soap and tobacco.' Grumbling was rife, but in the

legend that *Adventure in New Zealand* has created, the Company's settlers are the uncomplaining dummies of Wakefield's imagination. It would be useless and silly to try to abolish legend from popular history, but the legend should not be duller than the truth; and adequate historical editing of *Adventure in New Zealand* would have made the book more readable and amusing as well as more valuable as history. We can laugh with Wakefield when he attacks Auckland and the Governors. If the editor had exposed his ingenious misrepresentations, we could also have laughed at him when he defends the Company and its settlements.

*Michael Turnbull*

BACKBLOCKS BABY-DOCTOR. Doris Gordon. *Faber & Faber.* 15s.

ON ITS simplest plane this book is the story of country girl makes good. On a higher level it is the story of country girl makes havoc. On a much higher level still it is an important footnote to social history. There, it deals with the very great advances in the medical services of New Zealand in the last thirty years, particularly in the field of obstetrics and gynaecology. The person who has been most intimately associated with this progress and who has always held a nice balance between the concept and the realization is Dr Gordon herself. It was no easy path to victory and often enough on the way there were stubborn thistles bursting. The book, though aiming at simple autobiography, is more important as a revelation of the methods the author used to effect reform.

When Dr Gordon entered the Medical School in 1912 it was a poor place by overseas standards. The staff was good but was overworked. Examination requirements were high and learning took precedence over education. There was a grievous lack of equipment, time, money and research. The obstetrical education of the coming doctor was entrusted to a lecturer, Dr Riley, and two assistants, all with busy private practices of the most exacting type. Dr Riley was capable, beloved and uncomplaining. Because of this last the University assumed that all was well. Dr Gordon, when a house surgeon, was unconvinced and secured the independent evidence of the patient and discovered that all was not well. She became an obstetrician, a mother, and eventually the exponent of the cause of better obstetrics, which as soon as it met opposition became a crusade. She was instrumental in forming the Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society and was its first secretary. She led the national campaign that raised the funds to endow the Chair of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, a position so fortunately filled by Sir Bernard Dawson. She was the main inspiration behind the Postgraduate Hospital in Auckland. She was eventually appointed Director of Maternal and Child Welfare for New Zea-

land. During all this she conducted a busy practice, produced and reared a family, ran a household, taught and wrote on obstetrics, took a surgical degree in Edinburgh and packed her days with incident and her years with achievement.

British medicine has always been conservative and rightly so. But when Dr Gordon moved into action the forces of conservatism closed their ranks. She did not follow any devious path of a crank and stage a one-man army attack on them. She laughed at them but did not flay them. She was amused but not incensed at their contention that she was not slaying dragons but tilting at windmills. She wasted little effort trying to importune a reluctant government. Instead she polished the only legitimate weapon a reformer can use, namely public opinion. Her cause was good, her motives sincere, her plans practical, her energy unbounded, her personality humble. Given all this her success was inevitable.

The effectiveness of this blue-print for progress cannot be ignored and carries certain implications. For instance the poor status of University teaching generally in New Zealand at present is analogous to that of obstetrics thirty years ago and will continue poor until the individual protests are merged into a chorus. Reforms are made by free public opinion. Freedom has been defined as participation in power and the power of the ballot box alone is a poor snack in a hungry democracy. Give democracy a worthy cause and a leader to define it and the public are then soon shaping governmental measures

It would however be ungenerous to leave the impression that the only merit in the book is historical. Primarily it is the story of the author's life and it is told with a profusion of narrative and anecdote and a kindly sense of humour. Her exuberant personality is reflected in her writing as in her life. All through it is Doris Gordon talking to her old friends the public and telling them about herself and themselves. The result is a vivid story, exciting and dramatic.

*F. O. Bennett*

SHE WAS MY SPRING. J. R. Hervey. *The Caxton Press.* 15s.

AS A rough attempt to define the character of J. R. Hervey's poetry, we might say for a start that it is traditional in form, sympathetic to nature, and contemplative in spirit. But each of these three terms requires further definition if it is not to be misleading.

The nature of a writer's relation to 'tradition' has been well established by Eliot, and it is not hard now to think of Eliot or Pound as 'traditional' writers, despite their innovations. It is even easier to see that a writer like de la Mare is 'traditionalist', since

on the surface he does not appear to innovate at all. But it is more difficult to say what these two kinds have in common, and what separates them from the published (and probably large mass of unpublished) work in which 'tradition' has gone stale. It has something to do with aliveness of language, alertness to imagery, a relation to the actual rhythms of speech, and the sense of 'perpetual slight novelty'. It has also something to do with allegiance to good models, rather than a vague tendency to poeticize.

Mr Hervey's collected volumes, from *Selected Poems* (1940) onwards, represent the work of a man no longer young; one might expect him to speak an older, though not out-of-date, poetic language, like de la Mare. At one or two points he does recall something of the mysterious simplicity of that master, especially in a successful early poem, 'Mrs Carmichael', where it is in the very rhythm. But in the main his allegiances seem to lie elsewhere. It is as if he had responded to the same influences as younger men who were publishing at the same time, and occasional echoes suggest what some of these influences were. In the present volume, lines like

> This is the man in gray taller than
> Towers, more voluble than cities, bearing
> Wisdom like a bomb, dictating roads

suggest Auden, as well as the sort of thing that Auden and his generation learnt from Eliot. And even without the apt quotation from Spender in the dedication of the book, we might detect some influence from Spender's more muted style.

There is something that resembles the liturgical rhetoric of Charles Williams. An early poem, 'The Trumpeter of Cracow', suggested this very strongly, and it is seen here in lines like

> . . . her laugh/ Dazzled the curtains of hebetude . . .
>
> . . . the west is a field/ Of emancipation . . .

which sound like Williams's characteristic combination of abstract and concrete.

Among the older poets, the most obvious allegiance is to Donne. One need look no further in his new volume than the 'Variations on a Theme of John Donne', a good poem, though I think it lacks the weight of the earlier 'John Donne's Defiance'. Even here, Mr Hervey takes his stand with his younger contemporaries, for Donne remains perhaps the poet most consistently admired in our time. (I remember recently asking a young New Zealander at Oxford which poets were left for the young to admire after the Leavises and Batesons had done their fell work. After a long and thoughtful pause he answered: 'Well . . . there's Donne.')

More generally, there is a certain feeling of the seventeenth

century in some of the poems, especially where the writing is compact and elliptical. For example, the short poem 'Your Birth My Life':

> Your birth my life that was not yet
> Till our twin tendernesses met.
> But time that plays a tortuous game
> Twisted tomorrows till this came.
>
> This death in life, this empty calm,
> This riddle of your renouncing arm:
> This doom in depth love's counterpart,
> This halted hope, this coffined heart.

The effective terseness of the writing is metaphysical rather than augustan: it recalls the manner of Marvell, not Swift.

On the whole the technique of the poems neither intrudes nor dazzles, even though an occasional piece like the charming 'Christmas Come In' gives deliberate pleasure by its chime of words. Compared with a poet like Denis Glover, for example, Mr Hervey does not excite us by technical enterprise, though his forms are varied and often interesting. Perhaps we could call him traditional in this sense, that his personal tone and idiom have a sobriety, a moderation, something of the 'neutral style', which has also been associated with the seventeenth century.

## II

It is when we look at certain leading themes and images in the poems that we see something of what the natural scene means to this poet. Certain objects—trees and rivers, for example—recur in such a way as to suggest a feeling for the benign aspects of nature, which (in an early poem called 'Return to Nature') 'equips/ With buckler of solace'. The treatment of snowscape and mountains, however, supplies an interesting indication of his reaction to nature in its harsher moods. In some of the early poems, the snow is 'priestly', 'assuasive', 'shining sanity'; but soon it becomes 'the face of change whose frown/Invalidates the morning hope'; and in 'Man of December'—

> The weather report for him
> Is snow, his map imposes
> A country not concerned with roses.

The snowy peaks stand for remote achievement, and for a crude power which power can only humble. In the poem 'Mountain' (in *Man on a Raft*)—

> I turn away from
> The mountain that wears no bloom of kindness,
> It strikes the day with its sword of resolution.

Its image
Is too vital for me, commands me out of
My fragile reverie.

Save us from mountain men
Whose shoulders divide the clouds.

In these new poems, the mountain, glacier and snowfield are no less threatening, but their challenge is to be accepted—or rather, the poet accepts the kind of challenge or foreboding that they have come to symbolize for him. In 'White, Dark', he accepts the need to climb the last symbolic 'black mountain'—

That, too, is with me as a promised climb,
My life to plan a favourable approach.

The mountaineer is no longer the man who once 'humiliated' the peak; it is now for him 'the white beatitude, the fearful bride' which is his only desire. Behind this is a new acceptance and resignation, and a power to see (as Mr Hervey describes it in the early 'Salute to Youth')

beyond the comely camouflage
Of nature to the dark incredible grace.

If this represents an important reconciliation, in another way Mr Hervey seems never to have quite reconciled himself to the conquest of nature by man. In an earlier poem, the pylons 'walk in a land that is not for me', leaving a 'defaced heritage'; and now the railway-line and hydro-works show man truculently imposing his purpose—

And the hills stand in submission
And the dumb, disciplined waters,
For harder than driven stone or defiant rock
The hard core of the purpose and will of man.

The engineer humbles the landscape, as the mountaineer once did.

Nothing shows more clearly Mr Hervey's handling of nature-imagery than the use of references to the seasons. In *She Was My Spring*, these are remarkably consistent; their personal significance is pointed up by the title-poem, and they recur throughout the volume:—

But still her presence from the wintry grave
Will kiss my sorrow like a summer wave . . .

O rejected leaf black in the bitter alleys
Where is your spring? . . .

She sees the winter look with face of snow.
And icy omens blow
About my Love who with bewildered flakes
Now all my world forsakes . . .

I sang my love through leaves of spring
And all my joy was easy treasure . . .
. . . I sing where songs have fluttered down
I sing my love through autumn land.

Their significance is complex, and they seem to represent a reconciliation on a deeper level; for although spring and summer stand for renewal, he also accepts that the seasons of man's life are not a recurrence, that the coming of its autumn is to be accepted for itself, and that the 'summer wave' which touches his sorrow refers to something else altogether.

Throughout his work, Mr Hervey has constantly celebrated the Christmas theme, and it is frequently linked with the cycle of the seasons—an antipodean Christmas, whose genuineness should please Mr Sargeson or Mr Holcroft. The poem 'Christmas in the Sun' vividly brings together the two scenes, the New Zealand country summer, into which

the broadcast, scattering Christmas,
Brings night, and winter, and crying birth, and sheep
Watched under stars . . .

The Christmas poems are important, for they reveal the Christian sense of simplicity and love which is less directly present in the other poems as well; and they help us to see that the attitude to nature expresses a consistent mood of positive Christian acceptance.

## III

As contemplative poet, Mr Hervey's attitude is summed up in two lines of an earlier poem—

I am the watcher whose tower
Of solitude looks on life and death.

The contemplative usually writes best of scenes and experiences, not too remote from the tower, in which his own experience is most clearly reflected, as Ursula Bethell's was by her garden and the Canterbury scene. It is true, of course, in a somewhat different sense, that all poetry is contemplative; but we can distinguish a poetry like that of Pope or Auden, which delights in the distant prospect, and is exhilarated by surveying mankind from China to Peru. Mr Hervey's is not really of that kind. Yet the contemplative is also tormented by the sense that no man is an island, and feels that he must look abroad and speak of what he sees. And the danger is simply that he may not be equipped for this kind of long-sight.

This could be seen especially in some of *New Poems* (1942) and

in the title-poem and certain other pieces in *Man on a Raft* (1949), where the treatment of wartime themes is sometimes abstract and remote. The poem 'Mussolini', for example, does less than justice to the extraordinary melodrama of Mussolini's last days. It ends—

> Now death it is that's honoured when the chime
> Is that of the chain, and the only shout is hate
> Girding a gallows, and one obscene surrender,
> A head hanging towards the untroubled earth.

This fails by being less actual than the facts.

It is one measure of what Mr Hervey can do that he improves on this in a poem like 'Gandhi Dead', where after a diffident opening, he achieves simple and direct utterance, evidently because the subject, though not dissimilar in kind, is more directly within his view—

> No cry shall flee through India but its pain
> Shall darken round me, no division rend
> The fearful land but I too feel the sword:
> No blood shall bloom but I must wear again
> The rose of death, for I am India.

In the main, however, the new volume is much less concerned with subjects of this kind, with their suggestion, however faint, of newspaper headlines, than with contemplative experience proper to himself, however grievous it may be.

All this can be seen in another way, if we look at the structure of images within the poem. A stanza from 'Displaced Persons' (from *Man on a Raft*) shows what can go wrong: the displaced persons have been compared to trees, 'rooted with the rocks', spared by 'Ambition the incendiary', and 'returned to home' by the 'gentle roads'. Already the actuality of the trees has been almost entirely lost, when, in the third stanza,

> . . . the anchor of their content could not withstand
> The fiery storm and they were carried like dust
> Across the world to rest in a field of pain.
> In a hissing land whose stare was very death.

Trees, roads, anchors, storms (of fire), dust, field (of pain), land that hisses and stares—all coherence has been lost. The images no longer form a single pattern. Nor is the imagery of that other kind, in which the individual images are not necessarily congruous, but each is powerful enough to hand on the current of meaning to the next. The images form neither a unified whole (as often in Herbert) nor a series of conductive points (as sometimes in Donne).

This also I take to be a possible weakness of the contemplative poet: when the subject is not sufficiently present to him, or when

his imagination is not sufficiently seized with it, he cannot establish any valid objective correlative for it, and fails to follow it through. When the subject possesses him, the weakness of expression disappears. This happens often with the pervasive Christmas theme, which, in an earlier poem like 'The Bent Men' (*New Poems*), produces an interesting and consistent whole. So with another pervasive theme, that of mountains: in 'White, Dark', it is sustained right through to the powerful image of the 'black mountain' at the end.

In the main, it is again the strongly personal nature of many of the poems in *She Was My Spring* that gives them, and the whole volume, a greater cohesion and singleness, which reach from whole structures down to details of phrasing. As a more extended example of this, look at the concluding passage of 'Letter to Another World'. The poet has just recalled an earlier poem, written to his wife while on holiday:

> . . . I wrote once, you by a distant river,
> That time as a river carried nothing to me
> Until it brought you at the incredible hour.

Then he goes on:

> I write now, you on continuing holiday,
> So lacking the cornucopia of your presence,
> To tell you that summer redeems the earth, fore-
> shadowing
> Your deathless season, and that your garden wears
> No more an air of permanence and that I
> Hold it an island with temporary provisions
> Lying off the last continent and your completeness.

This is full of felicities. 'Continuing holiday' recalls the living mood of the earlier poem, and at the same time, referring to the death of the beloved, restores the 'holiness' to holiday by its suggestion of an endless Sabbath. 'Cornucopia' is perhaps a little florid, but, in the context, expressive. Then the poem takes up a group of images that are, for us, almost archetypal—season, garden, island. 'Summer redeems the earth'—the verb has at least a trace of its religious meaning; the endless summer of the dead is paradoxically 'deathless'; and even the 'shadow' in 'fore-shadowing' is operative in a kind of platonic sense. The 'garden' perhaps fleetingly recalls for us that other Garden in the Antipodes. 'I hold it an island'—'hold' is both 'defend' and 'consider'. 'Temporary' has an overtone of 'temporal' (as against the 'continuing holiday' and 'deathless season'). 'The last continent' perhaps suggests the pure, unsullied austerity of the Antarctic (the 'most lovely terror' of an earlier poem); and the whole reference to island and continent is an individual and Donne-like variation on our most characteristic

image. In the last lines especially, the phrasing and the fall of the stress move together with an exact calculation to the closes.

I have tried to look at these lines closely, because they seem to me an excellent example of what Mr Hervey does well. And they are all the more striking because they belong to one of the most personal poems in the volume. Yet they are also 'witty', rather in the sense that Eliot gives to the word in his essay on Marvell. The lines are moving because the highly personal emotion is disciplined by wit and intelligence; the final result is broad and tranquillizing.

The same thing could be said of the whole book, and especially of the 'Sonnets of Departure' with which it opens. Verse of this kind, expressing a highly personal sense of loss, can sometimes be embarrassing to read, when it demands our sympathy at the expense of our judgment. That is not the case here: the sonnets are impersonalized by their good, simple utterance. It is a kind of test that strong personal feeling should bring out a poet's quality, and that it should be this essentially dispassionate quality, for it shows that he has come to terms both with his experience and his craft.

*M. K. Joseph*

UNWILLING PILGRIM. Paul Henderson. *The Caxton Press.* 12s. 6d.

THIS poetry is essentially honest, perhaps of all gifts the most necessary to a growing poet. There are so many pressures, internal and external, pressing equally on the girl at Training College, the boy at Varsity, the housewife-poet who cares what the neighbours say and the *Listener* does not print, the old stager condemned to the whisky mines: pressure to choose for oneself another's good, to accept social anaesthesia for individual pain, to fill in the well when water fails instead of digging deeper. So many succumb, and are inevitably silenced, that one looks first, in a new first book, not for the graces of poetry (wealth of imagery, stanza control, assonantal harmony) but for the grit of personal experience mastered and held to, the exceptional honesty which requires exceptional moral courage and which alone can sustain growth. So much for the sermon. Paul Henderson's poems seem to me marked out by their honesty; they also possess a structural delicacy which can adequately reflect the delicate and fluctuating insights of this poet—

> If there were no lack I would find
> All answers in the dispassionate mind;
> But this need, hunger drives, and always
> I stand betrayed in my own senses.
> Betrayed? Dear love, if this were illusion

Then all must fall, and the sweet tension

Of my life alter.

I must confess a bewilderment, as reader and reviewer, on first reading the love poems in this volume. The dilemma of flesh and spirit which they conceived and stated seemed curiously remote; I could not imagine it my own. Another poem, 'The Young Legend', presented the same difficulty. Then the scales fell from my eyes with the realization that Paul Henderson is a woman poet writing under a pseudonym; and a world of vigorous, actual knowledge was exposed to me.

A living poem, being child of the flesh and spirit, rests on a subtle balance of intellectual and instinctual forces. The necessary identification of the reader with the poet requires him to sustain, for the moment, a parallel balance. Hence a male critic is handicapped in dealing with the work of a woman poet by his masculine pattern of instinctual response; hence, if obtuse, may regard a vigorous and well-balanced poem as a mere formal exercise. (I believe that some such confusion has often lain behind the comment of male critics on the work of Katherine Mansfield.) The resultant deprecation of the work of women writers has in the past led them to take up extreme positions—either a defensive feminism, with crude emphasis on 'female sensitivity', or a masking of difference, equally defensive, with the assertion that the intellectual and instinctual processes of a woman's mind are identical with those of a man. It is very natural that a woman poet, bringing out her first volume, should choose a masculine pseudonym.

Like Ursula Bethell, Mary Stanley, and in a lesser measure, Ruth Dallas, Paul Henderson has produced durable poetry from areas of experience mainly inaccessible or unrewarding to the male poet. The symbol of the inhabited temenos in 'The Island', and in several poems of house and garden, is explored with unsentimental delicacy and vigour. In 'Rock Garden' she employs flower names (as Ursula Bethell did) to evoke a mystical experience—

> In time the roots spread, bring bright bloom on the rock-face,
> And O what a fall of light, of locked loveliness;
> Grey-leaved arctotis, fuchsia, candytuft; and here place
> Arabis and alyssum, snow-drifting.

Her most characteristic poetry, however—as in 'After Flood', 'New Year Bonfire', 'The Ghost Ships'—has scope and energy far beyond the accustomed boundaries. The packed long line, the sharp visual imagery, even the occasional rawness, links her work with the best of Robin Hyde. In such poems, where human endeavour and

habitation contrast and mingle with the terrible, regenerative wilderness, one feels that she has already travelled far, escaping the Scylla of abstract metaphysics and the Charybdis of 'female sensitivity'. The 'New Journey' which she celebrates in the last poem in the book has been toward greater density of statement and a fuller awareness of the ambiguity of instinct—

> Till, tamer of lion lands and siren seas
> He walks towards the distant snows . . .
> Let him be slow to rise. No, let him leap
> Upon the world, enfold his vixen loves
> With all the ancient guile they turn upon
> The pulsing of his veins.

Plainly a real poet is among us. One hopes that her impulse will not be curbed or sterilized by the pressures, from within and without, toward stale conformity, with which we each are obliged to contend.

*James K. Baxter*

TRAVELLER'S LITANY. James K. Baxter.
CAST ON THE DOTING SEA. Robert Thompson.
THE DARK GLASS. Louis Johnson.
THE GAY TRAPEZE. Kendrick Smithyman.
POEMS IN DOGGEREL. W. Hart-Smith.
THE ISLANDS WHERE I WAS BORN. Gloria Rawlinson.

Poems in Pamphlet, Nos. 1 to 6. Edited by Robert Thompson. *The Handcraft Press.* 2s. each.

THIS series may have two purposes. It may be intended to display the printer's craft; it may be put out to overcome the alleged difficulty of getting books of verse published in New Zealand. If the former, then spirit has won a heroic victory over desperate circumstances; in spite of the limitations of the Handcraft Press these leaflets are pleasant to look upon and to handle. If the latter, then the end has not really been reached. In two cases the authors cry out for greater bulk; in two more they are notable sufferers from over-printing; only in the remaining two does the size of the publication suit the pretensions of the poems.

First, Miss Rawlinson and Mr Smithyman—if one may so violently wed opposite ends of the poetic spectrum. A sizeable book from each would be welcome. Since her childhood fame Miss Rawlinson has made only scattered appearances; this sequence, which is part of a larger work, and the poems which have of late appeared in the *Poetry Yearbook*, show that she is becoming a mature and skilful poet, with a distinctive language, a distinctive

set of themes and a cheerful heartiness of manner. This last quality has its debit side. There is an offensive lushness in the language of this tropic island sequence, a theatrical zeal for the thumping big noise, a 'literary' reliance upon the threadbare evocative word—which for me evokes Hawaiian guitars rather than the individual Pacific place which does manage to penetrate the atmospherics. But she has also a handy facility with uncomplicated but apt rhythms, descriptive skill (both, e.g. Part IV), and a genuine if discreet lyrical gift (Part VI). The philosophical meditations leave me unenthusiastic (Parts II and V), though they contain good lines and passages. The local colour laid on throughout makes me wish that Miss Rawlinson would leave the palette knife behind and take up a well-sharpened pencil. I could do without

> We skipped on ropes of orchids
> In moist rock-hollows hung with trumpeting vines;
> Roamed little valleys
> Where grass like green mice meadowed tiny ponies;
> Bathed in crystal—
> Clear sweet fathoms, watching jewels of fish in the coral-trees—

But I can welcome with enthusiasm

> Who is the dancer
> Sways at her anchorage
> By the salt grave?
> The palmtree our sister
> Of Adam's red clay;
> Slantset by hurricane
> Stripped to bone courage
> She claps like a scaredevil
> Through the moon's and the sun's day.

A book from Miss Rawlinson would let us see which of these two antagonists was winning.

To call Miss Rawlinson 'literary' is to condemn her frequent reliance upon book-tarnished words; to apply the same term to Mr Smithyman is not to condemn anything, but simply to describe. For him, reading a book seems to be as vital an experience as falling in love or getting drunk. This is very proper. Where some poets build poems upon the basis afforded by a coast-line or a woman's face, Mr Smithyman is as likely to begin with a scrap of historical knowledge, a painting, or someone else's poem. Or with many of them; and in his successful complexities he manipulates these recondite elements with great precision. But (as he probably recognizes) this limits his audience to those who already share his erudition, or are prepared to leaf through reference books. Take three examples from the present pamphlet. Is

it my good luck to know that the year '1832' was notable for a cholera epidemic in Europe, and that sometimes the upper classes behaved in rather a curious manner during this scourge? The clue is in the poem, but I doubt if it would have struck me with much force if I had not already known the facts. As it is I find the poem minor but masterly. 'Thinking of Otto Pettersson' takes me a little further. I do not, though perhaps I should, know who this man was; I don't feel obliged to locate him in a work of reference. Hence I must say: Well, perhaps this is good, but I for one will never know. Ideally, of course, a common fund of learning should merely intensify an enjoyment already there for any wide-awake reader. Ezra Pound's erudition is monstrously remote, but it does not give rise to or interfere with the excellences of the *Cantos*; if one knows a little American or Renaissance history one's enjoyment is simply deepened. Mr Smithyman gets close to this desirable point in 'Precincts of the Marble Faun'. I don't know who Larue is, nor the lady whose husband he appears to cuckold; that doesn't matter much, here, for the more important clues are perfectly straightforward. The poem clothes the bones of erudition with tangible and symmetrical flesh; here, for Mr Smithyman and for the reader, scholarship has become a passionate activity. In my ignorance of details, I can still say that this is a masterly poem. Again, a new volume from Mr Smithyman would be valuable; a great deal has happened since *The Blind Mountain*.

It would not be true to say that Mr Baxter's and Mr Johnson's contributions were wholly bad, and it would be presumptuous to pronounce them unnecessary. Each is too long in the tooth to print rubbish; each nevertheless is prone to rise to the bait of a new publication like an aged trout who has learned little discretion from years of precarious survival. In one of these pamphlets we have run-of-the-mill Johnson; in the other, run-of-the-mill Baxter. These are careless and unfinished poems; they might be good if we didn't know how much better they could (or should) be. Run-of-the-mill Baxter and Johnson is probably better than the best of most people, but it is a great deal worse than their own best. Everybody writes a quantity of second best, but these two as constantly publish it. One could speculate endlessly upon their reasons; perhaps they cannot tell first from second class; perhaps they need money (though the royalties from this venture must be small); perhaps, being kindly men, they like to give a puff to a new publication; perhaps, like Stephen Spender at one stage, they cannot bear to open anything printed without seeing their own names. . . . This could be an endless pastime, probably better left to Mr Baxter and Mr Johnson in their sleepless moments.

To be fair I should be more specific; first Mr Johnson. From the outset the reader meets formidable difficulties: a complex and rickety sentence structure; juxtaposition of dissimilar usages; parentheses of forbidding length; ejaculations and isolated words

which seem designed to obstruct the process of thought; the most extreme elisions. All this is no disqualification; for Mr Smithyman one could construct a list of different but equally alarming devices. The reader presses on, and, to be fair to Mr Johnson, he does get some reward for his pains, though not so much as he got in *Roughshod Among the Lilies*. Where, in the book, he could press through to a richness and a clarity he could never have enjoyed had he not been coerced into learning the poem more or less by heart, in the pamphlet he finds himself in the presence of something vaguely powerful, approximately ominous and certainly unsettling, but neither rich nor clear. The wall his head hits is not quite blank, but the graffiti have been carelessly scrawled, and the light is poor.

Take 'A Handout from Dr Jung' (and ignore, for the time, its perky assumption of familiarity with the great). I gather, as much from the title and from the first word ('memory'), that this poem has to do with a man's suppression of the awareness of events that cause him shame, and the ruin this process engenders in the life of man and society. Such suppressions, Mr Johnson says, are a lingering death ('It is safe to die in pieces, tremulous,' seems a revamping of this cliché); the alternative is sudden death or madness (this is what I assume 'a shape/ . . . tremendous/ in implications that erase escape' to mean; if it means something else Mr Johnson has not told us what). This process, the poet concludes, won't do; memory must face up to the past and master it; this commonplace, I think, is the substance of the concluding stanza. Mr Johnson may have read a couple of books by Jung, but that is no excuse for pursuing us in print with banalities.

Analysis would have the same unhappy results if applied to 'The Hunger': another psycho-therapeutic poem, relieved by the spectacle of the patient discovered, for the sake of the rhyme-scheme, crouching upon a couch. 'How to Make Love' is different; here, I think, we have the sobering spectacle of Mr Johnson laughing. I find I cannot even begin to analyse 'Showdown'; 'And the Cock Crowed' would probably come clear and be worth the trouble if just one clue was thrown in, just one inch of common ground offered to the reader as a toehold; it is at least a consistent structure of images. And (the kind word for the end) 'Relationship' is thoroughly satisfying: good, if not superlative Johnson; one of those explorations of sexual need and despair he can conduct so very skilfully; ranging, with complete consistency, through the moods of lyric, satire and analysis; the whole cemented by pity. I have taken so long to say so many hard things about Mr Johnson because his prodigality strikes me as one of the most dangerous signs in contemporary New Zealand literature. His talent is very great and something we should be grateful for; his contentment with his own second raters, and the diminishing trickle of his first rate, is something close to tragedy.

*Traveller's Litany* does not demand scrupulous analysis; Mr Baxter is seldom obscure out of the need to be faithful to complex intellectual processes. His obscurity, when it occurs, is of the more culpable kind; he clots and deranges his thought with those powerful noises he can so magnificently, but sometimes so fatally, make. But there is little of the trumpeting Baxter in this sequence; it is strangely unadorned. Mr Baxter is also a first-class technician who uses his skill to avoid discipline. He will fit a style to each separate part of his utterance; he will seldom (in a long poem) think and work towards the stylistic continuity and consistency of the whole statement. There is no unity of style in this sequence; Mr Baxter has, I think, shirked one of the most arduous tasks in verse: the creation of a style which comprehends, because it is part of, the whole utterance.

As a statement, the poem is (to me) a sound and complete one. As a collection of fragments it is written with a sure hand (which wobbled, however, more than a little when the lover declares 'There's nothing I like the look of/When you're not there'). Every section is illuminated by Mr Baxter's zeal for verbal order. Here I open myself to the favourite charge of the anti-critics: I talk of what a poem says and how it says it; I ignore what the poem is, its particular vitality. The charge is a grave one, but I plead the extenuating circumstance that, in this stern sense, *the* poem *is* nothing.

One quality of this writing I have ignored. It is, strictly, an act of adoration and worship; in the title 'litany' means a great deal. It is perhaps churlish to complain because a prayer is not a better one. But I believe that Mr Baxter is not praying with his mind at full stretch.

The two remaining groups of poems suit the size of a pamphlet better. I doubt if I could read more than seven poems of Mr Thompson's together, and I am hardly moved to demand the whole of Mr Hart-Smith's 'completed sequence'—though his philosophizings are enjoyable enough. He would, perhaps, do better if he were a little less arch and coy, less consciously the poet who is intimating: Look what an uncomplicated, simple, down-to-earth fellow I am. For I have come to suspect that Mr Hart-Smith is nothing of the kind, that his roughness and untutored appearance is as deliberate as Mr Smithyman's oblique manner. So I enjoy him best when his poems are out of the first person; when the roughness and oddity are attached to a *persona* in whom one can believe: the 'Archie McPhee' ballads, for instance.

It may be that I am constitutionally incapable of enjoying Mr Thompson's poems. I find it impossible to pronounce more than a few lines at a stretch without stammering. It is not that there is anything difficult to understand; the gymnastics are purely verbal. He has thrown himself headlong into a style (the origin of which is not far to seek) marked by compulsive alliteration, adjectives

that claim to do the work of whole qualifying clauses ('rained wail' I take to equal 'wail that falls from the sky like rain'), rhythms as insistent and characterless as static on the radio, images that startle but do not illuminate. And if Mr Thompson casts off an occasional striking image or line (as he does) this simply proves that one cannot try to write like another poet without, spasmodically, doing so. I do not think it will be possible to say anything more about Mr Thompson until he jumps out of his winding sheet.

*W. H. Oliver*

NEW ZEALAND POETRY YEARBOOK, 1955. Edited by Louis Johnson. *The Pegasus Press.* 10s. 6d.

THE chaste beige cover of the 1955 *Poetry Yearbook* gives us a truer impression of its contents than the exciting splash of orange on its dust-jacket. By this I don't imply that it is destitute of poems that might hold up their heads in any company; but as an anthology of 'the best of the year's work'—I quote from the introduction to the 1951 *Yearbook*—it is mildly disappointing. The preceding three numbers of the *Yearbook* were distinguished by a growing air of intellectual activity which promised a long and flourishing existence, and which reached a culmination last year in a series of informal prose contributions which provided a background for the poems. This year, however, a certain flaccidity makes itself felt. The surprise packet that we have learned to expect comes to us in the form of reprints of talks heard earlier on the radio. Delightful in their individuality of expression, they nevertheless contain little that is new, and by all three writers we are nagged rather than provoked. Then at the tail end of the volume we find that Robert Chapman's article on Kendrick Smithyman was commissioned as a commentary on poems that appeared in the fourth *Yearbook*, but wasn't ready in time! It is obviously a severe disadvantage that the poems discussed by Mr Chapman should not stand beside his exposition. It all sounds rather casual, and Mr Chapman's prose style does nothing to dispel this impression. The article itself is stimulating in spite of its occasionally laboured ingenuity.

The alphabetical arrangement of contributions can seldom have been seen to greater disadvantage than here. Had Mr Barker only been Mr Zoroaster, the unexpected lameness and inconsequence of his so-called sonnets might have been less striking. Again, when so many short pieces are included, the juxtaposition of two long poems, Ruth Gilbert's 'The Blossom of the Branches' and Denis Glover's 'Towards Banks Peninsula' is unnecessarily cumbersome.

Among the established writers, James K. Baxter is represented by

a substantial group of poems which invite a more detailed discussion than can be given here. While the reader cannot fail to be electrified by his technical control, and imaginative power, four of these poems are too obviously derivative to be read with complete conviction. The influence of Thomas is very marked in both the language and the thought of the first two poems, and in 'Sarabande' it is distractingly obtrusive. In 'Canticle of the Desert' it is Eliot who holds sway, nor is it merely the liturgical cast and conversational flatness of the language that suggest Eliot: his very ideas and images give the poem its body and its power. In 'The Giant's Grave' alone do we hear Mr Baxter's own individual voice, and a very impressive one it is. At such close range it is impossible to decide whether the others are more than brilliant imitative exercises. In sharp contrast is Denis Glover's long 'Towards Banks Peninsula', which could have been written by no one else. The economy and power of his evocation of character and local atmosphere are enviable. Louis Johnson tantalizes us with one arresting poem; a companion piece would have been very acceptable.

Kendrick Smithyman alone is successful among a trio moved to utterance by Shakespeare. A poet inspired by another's poem is in grave danger either of gushing or of inferior iteration. Mr Smithyman, on the other hand, enlarges the horizon. Much of his poetry has perplexed because his search for the naked thew and sinew of the language has been complicated by obscure references, but in these poems we are on familiar ground, and our concentration is encouraged and rewarded.

Of the other *Yearbook* veterans, Charles Brasch gives one brief moment of delight in 'Rain over Mitimiti Mountains', seeming more at home here than in his first poem. Allen Curnow says nothing to me, but says it very well. Of Pat Wilson's three contributions, two are inflated beyond what their frail constitution will stand. 'Travelling Home' is also marred by a straining after local colour and a pedestrian idiom. The *Yearbook* has already established a tradition of its own, so that its readers will observe and regret the absence of W. H. Oliver, Colin Newbury, Charles Spear and Alistair Campbell, among others. Mr Johnson justly pointed out last year that a poet may write nothing new, or nothing that he wants printed, for some time. But it is disquieting that the gaps left by these established writers are not filled, or even bridged, this year, for while there are not more than one or two poems which startle by their blatant badness, the general impression of the work of the lesser known writers is of a vast and rarely leavened lump. There are too many poems here that are extremely pleasant to read—just once. And again and again this lack of memorableness may be ascribed to the same causes. Archetypal images are freely used by these poets, but so often the phoenixes, fires, deserts or roses seem like useful pieces of conventional decoration rather than imaginative concepts of boundless possibilities. The adoption

of modes and attitudes already done to death is also regrettable. For instance, the glib disillusion of Suzanne Johnston's 'Poem at Zero' almost negates the vigour and originality that catch our attention at first. New voices are hard to find; either diffuseness (as in Mr Barker's sonnets) or, more rarely, compression to the point of incoherence, seems to be the rule of the day. There is frequently an exasperating motiveless quality about these poems; or where tension *is* set up, as in Ruth Gilbert's poem, a too-facile synthesis lets us down with a bump. I don't mean to classify Ruth Gilbert as a lesser known writer, but this poem, though touching and graceful, seems to me not one of her major achievements.

From the charge of dullness one must except Peter Dronke, for whose remarkable rendering of Karl Wolfskehl's 'Banishment' we must be very grateful. This poem, together with some of those of the Old Guard, whet our appetite for next year's number.

The Pegasus Press has made a good job of this volume. There are few misprints and the type and general layout is again pleasing.

*Ann Burby*

THE EDINBURGH REVIEW AND ROMANTIC POETRY (1802-29). Thomas Crawford. *Auckland University College*. Bulletin No. 47, English Series No. 8. 4s.

MR CRAWFORD in this examination of the *Edinburgh Review's* attitude to romantic poetry has undertaken the delightful task of disproving an established opinion. Most students of English literature have a strong if hazy impression that the early nineteenth century provides the classic examples of reviewers making fools of themselves, and that the *Edinburgh*, if less remarkable for savage bad taste than the *Quarterly* and *Blackwood's*, was equally wrong-headed in most of its pronouncements. Such vague general impressions are often mistaken, and Mr Crawford has done a real service to scholarship by his consideration of the evidence on which this one is based.

His conclusion is that the popular view of the matter is wrong. The *Edinburgh Review*, although consistently unfavourable in its discussions of Wordsworth and Coleridge, yet from its beginning maintained critical principles that were moderately advanced, and by 1816 (fourteen years after its foundation) had reached a position strongly sympathetic towards the work of the second generation of romantic poets. The arguments he brings to support this conclusion are well reasoned and well documented. The only objection that could be made to his statement of the general principles observed in the *Review* is that it is too brief. The reader is tantalized by allusions to Jeffrey's review of Alison's *Essays on the Nature of Taste*, and by passing references to the aesthetic

philosophies of Kant, Ruskin, Bosanquet and E. F. Carritt. Mr Crawford's discussion of the *Edinburgh's* own philosophy, however, is precise and most interesting, and clearly establishes his contention that, so far from being rigidly bound to the 'neo-classic' tradition, its writers held a complex system of aesthetics which certainly allowed for a very sympathetic treatment of the new poetry.

Mr Crawford's assertion of the *Edinburgh's* warm interest in the literature of the middle ages is also convincing, and a very valuable contribution to the study of the changing attitude to the past which was so important a part of the romantic movement. But there is one serious weakness in the examination of the judicial criticism, which forms the largest section of the bulletin. This is the failure to make clear to the reader just what sort of thing the *Edinburgh Review* had to say about the early romantic poets. As this seems to me to be an important part of Mr Crawford's subject, I propose to give a very short account of these dicta.

Jeffrey himself wrote the reviews of Wordsworth's *Poems* of 1807, of *The Excursion*, and of *The White Doe of Rylstone*. Their vigour, their sublime confidence, the skill with which they fasten on the weak and silly, the prolix and platitudinous in Wordsworth's poems, make them a pleasure to read. We are mighty fine critics nowadays, but we cannot write like Francis Jeffrey. As well as the vigour, the wit, the bold intolerance, these articles show at times considerable acumen. This is specially true of the review of the *Excursion*, where he gave warm praise to what are now generally agreed to be the finest parts of the poem.

On the other hand, Jeffrey entirely failed to understand Wordsworth's real intention. Mr Crawford quotes the memorable opening of the review of the *Excursion*—'This will never do.' He might also have quoted the first sentence of the review of the *White Doe of Rylstone*—'This, we think, has the merit of being the very worst poem we ever saw imprinted in a quarto volume.' Or the two sentences devoted to the 'Ode on Intimations of Immortality' —'This is, beyond all doubt, the most illegible and unintelligible part of the publication [the *Poems* of 1807]. We can pretend to give no analysis or explanation of it.' Or the words which conclude an account of that wonderful poem, 'Resolution and Independence'—'We defy the bitterest enemy of Mr Wordsworth to produce anything at all parallel to this from any collection of English poetry, or even from the specimens of his friend Mr Southey.' Even more significant of Jeffrey's inability to understand Wordsworth is his discussion of the one poem (apart from the sonnets) which he can wholeheartedly commend, the 'Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle'. He ends his praise by quoting the final passage of the poem, but omits one verse, a verse so familiar and so full of meaning for the modern reader of Wordsworth that the omission is hardly credible.

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

This is one of the most concise and effective statements of Wordsworth's deepest convictions, but Jeffrey chose to ignore it.

Similarly, in the very number of September, 1816, in which, as Mr Crawford points out, Jeffrey made such a handsome acknowledgement of the virtues of the new poetry, there appeared a review of the volume in which Coleridge published 'Christabel', 'Kubla Khan', and the 'Pains of Sleep'. This review is to my mind unsurpassed for rancorous misrepresentation of the poems and for unpleasant insinuations about the poet. 'Christabel' is travestied in a facetious summary, 'Kubla Khan' regarded as drunken meanderings, and the 'Pains of Sleep' dismissed as 'mere raving, without any thing more affecting than a number of incoherent words, expressive of extravagance and incongruity'. The volume is summed up in these words:

> Upon the whole, we look upon this publication as one of the most notable pieces of impertinence of which the press has lately been guilty. . . . The thing now before us, is utterly destitute of value. It exhibits from beginning to end no ray of genius; and we defy any man to point out a passage of poetical merit in any of the three pieces which it contains, except, perhaps, the following lines. [There follows a quotation of the passage beginning 'Alas, they had been friends in youth'.] With this exception, there is literally not one couplet in the publication before us which would be reckoned poetry, or even sense, were it found in the corner of a newspaper or upon the window of an inn.

Now none of this invalidates Mr Crawford's conclusion that the *Edinburgh* after 1816 progressed to something resembling alliance with the second generation of romantics. (After all, as far as Wordsworth and Coleridge were concerned, it shared the views expressed in 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers', in Byron's later works, and in 'Peter Bell the Third'.) Its treatment of Shelley was just, of Keats sympathetic. And this is a point that needed to be made, as a corrective to the general vague belief that it was hostile to all romantic poetry. On the other hand, such a long-established belief is usually based on some evidence, which must be considered in any attempt at correcting it. The *Edinburgh Review's* consistent attitude to Wordsworth and Coleridge surely invalidates Mr Crawford's claim that the only fault in its critical outlook was that it had no room for Utopia. It had no room for much more serious things.

*Margaret Dalziel*

SCULPTURE AND DESIGN. AN OUTLINE OF MAORI ART. Gilbert Archey. Auckland War Memorial Museum Handbook, 1955. 4s.

SINCE the richness of Maori decorative art was first made known to Europeans, two questions have predominated in the rather casual interest of the Pakeha New Zealander:—the first, whether the details of a particular carved or painted pattern told a story; the second, where the Maoris got their designs from.

Although there was never a time when the Maoris themselves could have answered the second question, they might well have answered the first as late as the eighteen-seventies, given sufficient interest on the part of the Pakeha questioner and the necessary rapport between him and the wood-carving expert. Since then it has always been too late, and to interpret the significance of the details of decorative carving applied in the early eighteen-hundreds we have the aid of little more documentation than with a Han or T'ang grave find from China. The interpretation of Maori art has become a study of museum specimens.

While no subsequent publication has approached the magnitude of Augustus Hamilton's four-hundred-page *Maori Art*, published in 1896 on behalf of the New Zealand Philosophical Institute, and long a book collector's rarity, Hamilton's main purpose was to publish a source book of photographs of 'the remaining monuments of Maori skill and art' by which 'the general character and peculiarities of Maori Art might be studied'. Among those museum curators who have made a specialized study since, Dr Gilbert Archey must rank as the most articulate. As Director of the Auckland War Memorial Museum he has had under his eye, daily, what is probably the world's greatest collection of masterpieces of Maori wood-carving. For many years he has pondered, lectured and published on the lessons he could extract from the museum's treasures. In his Handbook, published last year, the author comes nearer to answering the question of meaning than any writer to date, in an essay whose text and presentation of illustrations alike call forth admiration.

Thus, for instance, Dr Archey on the role of the distinctive plank-built house (whether kumara barn or meeting place), developed in New Zealand, in response to climatic needs, to become the major medium through which the Maori wood-carving art expressed itself:—

> In his house-building the Maori found incentive for extending his portrayal of tribal history; he also found scope for developing his art. House posts were primarily houseposts; but when they were asked, as they invariably were, to be historic persons as well, natural representation had to yield to structural requirements. The challenge of applied sculpture had to be met, the figure to be absorbed into the shape of the post, lengthened and straightened to become and remain a housepost whereby the

ancestor as well as the post supported the house practically and the community symbolically.

The requirements of applied sculpture were not merely a limitation; they became also an opportunity and a stimulus for an enterprise that was to carry the Maori carver forward into a richly-diversified decorative art. For instance there are more planks than posts in Maori houses; planks provide room for the human figure to be widened and for its now broad features, limbs, shoulders, thighs, feet, to become areas for decoration. But they still combine structural and sculptural quality with commemorative purpose, as when Ngangaia and Matatahi, ancestors of the Ngatimaru tribe, stand part of the wall of Ngatimaru's tribal meeting house, Hotunui; and with fifty other carved ancestors are at once the essential structure of the house, the history of the tribe and the integration of the community.

Having so happily expressed the social and commemorative purpose of house carving, the author selects for more detailed consideration one of the outstanding achievements of the carved meeting house, its skilfully fretted door lintel (*pare*) and the threshold board (*paepae*) of the store house. Despite marked differences of style in the different districts of the North Island, it is fascinating to follow his demonstration of the common theme that may be found in all:—

> . . . for although the theme or content is known from several samples, no two of them are alike, while the intriguing variety among them and the complete and satisfying rhythm they express never fail to challenge our discernment as they stimulate our closer attention.

In just the same way he moves to the distinctive Maori war canoe structure, as the second great field for wood-carving expression, selecting for discussion the regular arrangement of motifs underlying the regional variety.

> Undoubtedly there was meaning in the arrangements that appear regularly in *pare*, *pae-pae*, prow or stern-post. Although what was portrayed or symbolized seems not to be recorded in tradition and legend, or we have missed it, we may be sure that the community at large understood the meaning as clearly as did the *tohunga* who wrought it. And as we today look into these compositions with some understanding of what they contained and of how the thoughts and ideas within them were expressed, we too may share in some measure the interest and enjoyment that the villagers and the *tohunga* alike experienced in Maori art at its richest and best.

The numerous line and half-tone illustrations are as skilfully selected and presented as his text, though the original locality and present whereabouts of the works of art illustrated are not given.

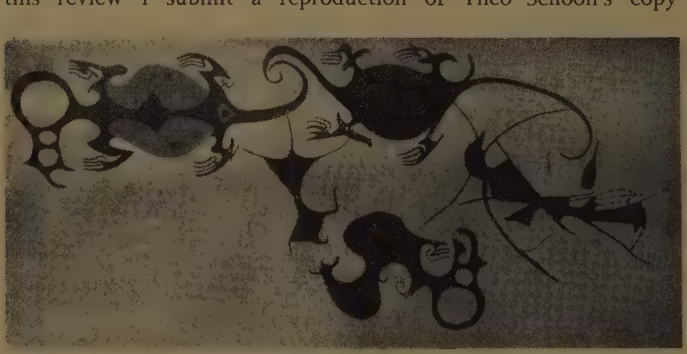
It is when we turn to the second question, the origin and relationships of Maori wood-carving motifs, that Dr Archey's Handbook stands open to a more severe criticism. Although the introduction states that it is not his explicit purpose to discuss origins, he is inevitably caught up in a restatement of the thesis of local development of all motifs from the human figure which has been his chief contribution in earlier scientific papers to this aspect of the study of Maori art. In doing so he becomes so carried along by the rhetoric of his own arguments, that he charges those students, unnamed, who hold the opinion that Maori wood-carving motifs include patterns not derived from the human figure, and originating beyond New Zealand, as enemies to and detractors of the Maori artist; they would charge the Maori artist with being 'a mere copyist'. 'The question of origins is this: did the Maori carve in patterns and forms brought with him from Tahiti or did he create an art of his own?'

These arguments, posing entirely unreal alternatives, are more appropriate to the tactics of legal counsel in a court of law than to the needs of a museum Handbook which should avoid controversy as far as possible, and report only what has general acceptance. Indeed this is the first publication in which Dr Archey has been led to do less than justice to those who hold a contrary opinion.

It is not difficult to suggest a reason for this, namely that the text of the Handbook represents the commentary of an illustrated lecture transferred to print. It seems indeed to have been prepared as the Cawthron invitation lecture, Number 28, also published in 1955, which appears identical in format and text with the Handbook under review. I can well imagine that the audience will remember it as a remarkable lecture, but the needs of a lecture and a Handbook are by no means identical. In the former it is natural that the lecturer should present a strongly personal point of view, embellished with all the persuasive eloquence for which Dr Archey is noted, but such a lecture reduced to cold print falls short of the needs of a Handbook.

To return now to Dr Archey's thesis, there is general agreement with his main contention that the remarkable elaboration and complexities of design which distinguish Maori wood-carving from that of the tropical Polynesian islands developed in New Zealand. As reasons, he suggested in earlier papers the abundance of easily worked timber, the superior edge of nephrite cutting tools, and in the present Handbook, if not sufficiently stressed, the unique forms which house and canoe developed in Aotearoa. Where his colleagues part company with the author, is in the interpretation of the original corpus of prototype motifs which, brought from Polynesia, sowed the seeds of Maori art. Dr Archey assumes only the human figure and boldly proceeds to derive all wood-carving patterns from it:—from commemorative house post sculptures comes

the full-face human figure (*tiki*), either in the round, or as a relief pattern; with face turned sideways it becomes the *manaia;* from the opposing of *manaia* mouths, comes the double spiral and all its variations; the chevron similarly represents the end-product from a crooked knee or elbow. If attention is directed only to North Island wood-carving Dr Archey's hypothesis appears highly attractive, if only because these end-product designs provide little perspective in space and time. Dr H. D. Skinner of Otago Museum leads the school of those who would apply the test of comparison with design motifs in ochre, stone, bone, ivory, shell, as well as wood, from the South Island and the Chathams in particular, and against the wider back-drop of Polynesia and Oceania. On this basis the double spiral and its relative the running S-spiral (*puhoro*), along with the *manaia,* the chevron, and other elements not isolated in Dr Archey's field of study, appear to represent inheritances from an original widespread Oceanic tradition of decorative art which can be traced back beyond Polynesia to a hypothetical Indonesian diffusion centre. The contrast of Dr Skinner's approach can be easily demonstrated from the South Island rock drawings where single and double spirals appear as integral design elements on fish, dogs, and whales no less than men and on what can only be interpreted as a representation of the mythical *taniwha.* With this review I submit a reproduction of Theo Schoon's copy



of the taniwha composition from the roof of a cave shelter on the Opihi River, South Canterbury. Close inspection will reveal at various points in the 'negative' of this composition, single spiral volutes of the type known in North Island Maori rafter patterns as *koru,* while the genesis of the double spiral created by the tail of the left upper *taniwha* and the (?) head of its neighbour is more clear than in the series illustrated by Dr Archey from wood-carving. Indeed in the detail from my own tracing the double spiral is more clearly developed than in Mr Schoon's painting. Further·

more the treatment of the head of the left upper and lower right *taniwha* have more than a little in common with the classical representation of the *manaia* head in wood-carving. Finally the inspiration for the bodies of the *taniwha* themselves supports Dr Skinner's contention that in tradition, as well as in art, the *taniwha* represents a folk memory of the Indonesian crocodile.

Whether or not the reader of the Handbook prefers Dr Archey's hypothesis to Dr Skinner's as I have made bold to set it down, we would agree that the Handbook fails as such for not taking the latter into account. If we regard it for what it is—a highly convincing exposition of the author's views alone—we can read it with the same profit and enjoyment which I have derived in perusing it for this review.

*Roger Duff*

GREEK VASES IN THE OTAGO MUSEUM. J. K. Anderson. Otago Museum Handbook No. 2. *Dunedin, Otago Museum*. 6s. 6d.

NO COUNTRY is further away than New Zealand from the centres of ancient civilization, and the authorities of the Otago Museum deserve particular credit for the efforts they have made to overcome this remoteness and to set before both student and casual visitor a representative collection of material from the ancient world. In this, Greece is rightly given pride of place, for it is to the Greeks that we owe the foundations of western European art. Sculptured originals in these days are not easily to be had—Otago is singularly fortunate in its possession of the fifth-century marble head, probably from the Parthenon—and then usually only at a price which puts them out of court for any but the wealthiest museums, and so it is understandable that a young museum must turn to smaller objects like bronzes, terracottas and vases, which can still be obtained fairly readily, to illustrate the development of Greek art. With the intelligent use of supplementary material in the form of photographs and reproductions, such a collection can be made to serve its purpose admirably, and the Otago Museum is to be most warmly congratulated on what has been achieved over the past decade or so.

It was a happy chance which enabled the Museum to acquire in 1948, as a memorial to the late Willi Fels, its most consistent supporter and benefactor, the collection of Greek pottery built up by Professor A. B. Cook to illustrate the lectures he used to give on vase-painting in Cambridge, where for many years he was Reader and later Professor of Classical Archaeology. This was essentially a teaching collection and had been assembled with the practical aim of representing as far as possible different styles and periods; one could therefore hardly expect it to contain many

masterpieces, but it does include a number of vases of considerable interest by reason of style or subject. Among these we may mention the fine Geometric jug (2), the large Protoattic pyxis (12), the black-figure amphora by the Antimenes Painter (48), and the lekythos illustrating the escape of Odysseus from the cave of the Cyclops (67), the red-figure hydria with the oracular head of Orpheus (72) and the pelike by Polygnotus showing Boreas in pursuit of Oreithyia (73: the numbers are those in the handbook).

The authorities wisely decided not to rest content with the acquisition of the Cook vases and during the past five years the collection has been greatly expanded by the judicious purchase of many new items, chosen for their artistic merits or to help fill the more important stylistic gaps. Amongst the most interesting we may note the new Geometric vases (4, 5, 7 and 8), which have greatly strengthened that section, the admirable black-figure amphora (49) showing the departure of a warrior, the archaic red-figure mug (68) with Phrixos and the ram, the graceful oenochoe by the Shuvalov Painter (69) or the column-krater by the Pig Painter (75). But the outstanding acquisition is undoubtedly the superb Caeretan hydria (no. 129; E53.61—the index number is omitted in the text), which was presented to commemorate the services of Dr H. D. Skinner to the Museum, and which has recently been more fully published by the author (*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1955, pp.1-6, pl.I). Vases of this style appear very rarely on the market and Dunedin may congratulate itself on being the possessor of what is certainly the most distinguished piece of Greek pottery in the southern hemisphere and an eminently appropriate tribute to the man whose directorship led to such imposing developments in the Museum.

Greek pottery may perhaps be considered an acquired taste, and the casual visitor certainly needs some sort of guide or introduction to assist his appreciation of it. This has now been admirably supplied by a lecturer in Classics at Otago University, Mr J. K. Anderson, in the form of a handbook which provides much of value and interest to the scholar, as well as giving an excellent introductory survey of the whole subject for the ordinary reader. It starts off with a brief discussion of the different shapes most commonly found among Greek vases—here an illustration would have been a welcome addition—and of their uses; we are told something of the actual process of their manufacture, and then are taken through the chief stages in the history of Greek pottery —Geometric, Orientalizing, Black-figure and Red-figure—with a concluding glance at South Italian, Etruscan and Roman wares. Each section is well illustrated by reference to actual vases in the Otago Museum, and the more important pieces are discussed in detail, with lively care and at times not a little 'Attic salt' as well. The sixteen well-produced plates, which figure a good selection of the more interesting examples from different periods and fabrics,

much enhance the value of the book, which reflects great credit upon all concerned in its production and of which many a larger museum might well be proud.

*A. D. Trendall*

# CORRESPONDENCE

To The Editor

Sir: While broadly agreeing with the remarks of P. J. Downey on Documentary Films in New Zealand, I feel that more information, a clearer idea of the Documentary Film's intention, and the seeing of more films, especially in their intended setting in the midst of commercial cinema programmes, might modify some of his views.

On grounds of lack of unity, Mr Downey disapproves of our four-weekly semi-newsreel *Pictorial Parade* series. This is, next to the late *Weekly Review*, our most successful product, the regular release securing it about four times the audience that any individual short can reach. Re-edited here as *New Zealand Mirror* for overseas distribution, these reels have been gaining high critical and popular acclaim in the United Kingdom and are a major factor in giving films a ranking amongst New Zealand's export industries.

The Documentary Director's job is to report facts, to report them imaginatively, constructively and memorably, but not to set form so inflexibly about content that his facts are distorted. Facts reported in documents should be reliable enough to form the basis for action.

Few real life subjects present a perfectly unified theme to a film author. In imposing a unity he may fictionalize his subject. If his ultimate aim is to become a Feature Director, then fictionalizing can help his career, but that is another story.

Why it is that first-rate short films emerge from Miramar from time to time is a question which a critic might well investigate. As far as we are aware, there is no government policy laid down that prize-winning films are to be made; nor on the other hand is the making of such films a series of acts of insubordination. Good films may occur when someone of creative ability is assigned a subject susceptible of having unity thrust upon it.

I agree with Mr Downey that music off discs is theoretically indefensible. In practice, however, it is merely a shade unsatisfactory. Its use is the price of working in a country where orchestras obtainable at short notice are even scarcer than fast working composers. What we get off discs has at least the virtue of being

competently played, while specially composed music is expensive and not necessarily successful.

Mr Downey complains we have no Script Writers on our staff, the implication being that we ought to recruit from the Literati. It happens that the only one of our films criticized overseas for bad writing has a narration by a very able poet, not experienced in films.

Training a still photographer to forget his fixed ideas and become a cinematographer is hard enough. Training an established writer to subordinate words to pictures could be even harder. Film writing is very much the art of the possible. A visual imagination is its first need, cutting-room and recording studio its best training grounds. I cannot think that John Feeney's *Legend of the Wanganui River* and later films would have been improved by calling in a writer trained in some other field to help with their construction. During the past fourteen years I can remember only one outside writer having sent us useful scenarios. At present count by the way, we have in fact nine Script Writers.

Films give much of the world its only acquaintance with New Zealand. Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and Scotland have all given New Zealand films awards in recent years, while New Zealand herself seems only dimly aware that such films exist, allowing film men on whose training much public money has been spent to get the full cash reward of their training overseas only, in the same manner as the country's more ambitious engineers and research workers.

Mr Downey's was a sound article, even if based on rather few facts. I hope he will look further into the subject and write again.

*James Harris*
*N.Z. National Film Unit*
*Miramar, Wellington*

SIR: It is hard work arguing with Mrs Ross because we seem to get at cross purposes.

I am sorry that I cannot agree with her repeated opinion that the reasons for the change from the furlough to the replacement scheme are not adequately documented. I have already explained that some cables were missing and that I admitted that we should have drawn attention to this fact. They are still missing but we doubt whether they were important. The message of 28 September 1943 which worries Mrs Ross was not important but it was highly personal, and in good faith I thought it of no public interest, though indeed the public might have been interested. But it did not affect the decision and I am not going to publish it. The story

will be more fully related in Professor Wood's volume on *Political and External Affairs*, for which he has used sources other than those within the scope of *Documents*.

Mrs Ross quotes Lord Freyberg against me in support of her contentions that he faced a Court of Enquiry after the Greece and Crete campaigns and apparently she thinks we were trying to conceal that fact. What happened was that the C. in C. Middle East set up an Inter-Services Committee to enquire into various allegations about the conduct of those campaigns, including one that General Freyberg had lost control of his Division during the retirement in Greece. The General appeared before this Committee and in time has come to think of it as a Court of Enquiry—a very different affair. The Committee did not hear many of the most important witnesses and its Report and Proceedings, which we hold, have as I said—nothing to do with policy and precious little historical value. On about ten times as much information as it had we have come to the same conclusions about General Freyberg's handling of his troops. It was never discussed in communications between him and the New Zealand Government and so there was nothing about it to put in *Documents*. Mr Fraser made some personal inquiries in Egypt and what we know about them and about the Committee will appear in *1939/40 and Greece* which I hope will be completed early this year.

I can't add anything to what I have said about paraphrasing. In the Preface to *Documents* Vol. I I said that some messages had been paraphrased to meet security requirements. I thought that the four examples given would satisfy most people that the meaning and gradations of meaning had survived this operation. In any case an enciphered message is very seldom decrypted in the exact words written by the sender of the message. But I repeat that all messages transmitted by wireless and enciphered which have so far been published by anybody have been paraphrased. The messages printed in *Documents* III will be paraphrased or not according to the instructions we receive from the United Kingdom Cypher Policy Board. At present most of those dated earlier than 1 January 1944 can now be published as received.

As to a 'precise definition of the Editor-in-Chief's views and policy on the functions limitations and editing of official documents' I don't think that I can add anything to what I said in the Preface to *Documents* Vol. I. If this leaves the editorial policy obscure I am unable to clarify it. What I said was that 'it was necessary to do so [i.e. publish the documents] in order to record fully New Zealand's part in the Second World War'. Obviously they were meant to be supplementary to the Campaign and Civil volumes, they could be published long before those volumes could be completed, and they contained, on the subjects with which they dealt, all the important relevant messages which passed between the authorities responsible for the decisions on those subjects. The

first two paragraphs of that Preface still seem to me to state clearly 'my views and policy on the functions, limitations and editing' of these particular official documents, and I cannot elucidate the matter any better if it remains obscure. Perhaps I should have pointed out that they were in part supplementary but the word 'fully' was used to make that clear and I think that it did.

*Howard K. Kippenberger*
*Editor-in-Chief*
*New Zealand War Histories*

SIR: Sir Howard Kippenberger's letter will assist historical assessment of Lord Freyberg's speech in the House of Lords. His letter suggests that he now recognizes what prompted my original review—genuine interest in War History publications. But it is a pity that a tedious year's controversy was necessary to secure some valuable facts and some elucidation of the editorial techniques employed in *Documents*.

*R. M. Ross*

SIR: The presages concerning New Zealand civilization 'attributed to Gibbon', that Mr McCormick was unable to trace (see *Landfall* 36, p.303), are to be found towards the end of c. XXV of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (p.500, Vol. II of the Everyman edition). Gibbon acquired Cook's Second and Third *Voyages* about the time of his writing this chapter and evidently owed to them what knowledge of the Antipodes he possessed. In the year that sees those *Voyages* magistrally edited by a New Zealander Gibbon's sentences gain in piquancy from the occasional presence of New Zealand's Hume—if Arthur Prior may be so called—as an honoured guest in the college from which the historian was expelled.

*J. A. W. Bennett*
*Magdalen College*
*Oxford*

## NEW CONTRIBUTORS

*Rewi Alley*. Born in Springfield 1897. Has lived in China since 1927, as a factory inspector, then organizing industrial co-operatives and the Sandan Bailie School. Has published *Gung Ho, Leaves from a Sandan Notebook, Fragments of Living Peking,* etc.

*F. O. Bennett*. Christchurch physician, descendant of an early pioneering family of Canterbury. Has contributed sundry articles on general subjects, mainly to New Zealand publications. Is at present writing a book on the social history of Canterbury.

*Ann Burby*. Born in London 1933, came to New Zealand in 1949. Graduated in English at Canterbury University College, is now attending Christchurch Teachers' Training College.

*William Culbert*. Born 1935 in Port Chalmers. During 1951-2 studied painting full-time under James Coe in Lower Hutt. Last year completed his diploma of Fine Arts in Christchurch and this year is doing the honours course in painting. Showed with The Group in Christchurch last November, where the portrait reproduced here was exhibited.

*Roger Duff*. Born in Invercargill in 1912 and educated at Christchurch B.H.S., Otago University and Canterbury University College. For two years in Native Affairs Office in Samoa. Ethnologist at Canterbury Museum, 1938. Began the excavation of Pyramid Valley Swamp in 1939. Spent nine months in Britain studying museum methods and collections and was then appointed Director of Canterbury Museum (1948). His researches into the Moa-Hunters were embodied in his book, *The Moa-Hunter Period of Maori Culture*, 1950.

*John Holmwood*. Born in Wellington 1910. Painter, stage and costume designer; works in Auckland in commercial art and industrial display. Has designed costumes and sets for C.A.S. Theatre and Auckland Festival of the Arts Ballet. Sometime Adult Education tutor in art appreciation. Member of Council, Auckland Society of Arts.

*Gabrielle Hope*. Born in Lower Hutt 1916. Painter. Has exhibited in Hamilton, Wellington and Tauranga as well as in Auckland where she held a one-man show at the Society of Arts in 1955. Works mainly in water colour but also in oil, gouache, ink and chalk. She is represented in the Auckland Art Gallery's collection by a pen drawing reproduced in this number.

*Lincoln Lee*. Born at Thorndon, Wellington, 1884. Educated at Wellington College and Victoria University College. Worked as a law clerk from 1906 to 1939; fought in France and Belgium during the First War; visited Britain in 1938. Has lived for thirty years at Titirangi. Always an occasional writer and translator of verse; later a self-taught landscape painter in water colour, who has had pictures bought by Auckland Art Gallery. His mother was the only daughter of the painter John Gully of whom he has written a short life.

*P. J. O'Farrell*. Born in Greymouth 1933. After completing an honours degree in History at Canterbury University College in 1955, with research into West Coast liberalism and socialism in the period 1865-1913, was awarded a Research Scholarship in History at the Australian National University, Canberra.

*Alan Roddick*. Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 1937, came to New Zealand in 1952. Starting at Auckland University College this year.

*Earle Spencer*. Born in Greymouth 1928, and grew up in the Buller district. A graduate of Otago University, was a teacher and is now a civil servant.

*A. D. Trendall*. Born in Auckland 1909. Read classics at Otago University

and took the classical tripos at Trinity College, Cambridge, specializing in archaeology. Fellow of Trinity College. Librarian, British School at Rome, 1936-8. Professor of Greek in the University of Sydney, 1939, and from 1948 Professor of Archaeology too and Curator of the Nicholson Museum. Since 1954, Master of University House in the Australian National University, Canberra. Has published various works on South Italian pottery, a handbook to the Nicholson Museum, and a catalogue of the South Italian and Etruscan vases in the Vatican.

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# *Notes*

We in this country have never had much communication with our neighbours in Asia. Individual links are many, through the churches, in normal commercial relations; most of us have friends among Chinese or Indian market-gardeners and fruiterers; students from several Asian countries come here now in appreciable numbers. But New Zealand (unlike Australia) offers no means of studying even one of those countries: our universities still ignore the world east of Suez. None of the great civilizations of India, China and Japan is present to us as a living reality, a dynamic centre of life and thought, though their thinking is about to change the world, and us with it.

It is, we must hope, a good omen that public relations between New Zealand and the new China should have been opened by an invitation from the Chinese People's Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries for a cultural delegation from this country, with one from Australia, to visit Peking in April and May. Social and cultural exchanges form an excellent beginning for interest in and knowledge of any country; and we have now to become as familiar with Asia as we have been with Europe.

An alert clear-sighted government would have welcomed, tacitly, unofficially (since we do not recognize Peking, though recognition cannot be very long delayed), this opportunity for a distinguished unofficial delegation to go to China with its good will, which would have committed it to nothing. The New Zealand Government preferred to show disapproval—unofficially, and to prevent one or two people going who would have been ornaments to the delegation. The attitude was petty, the policy implied out of date, out of touch with political and human realities. We cannot treat as untouchables people who live not only in the same world with us, but just over the water. Because they are communist they are not less human beings, seeking the good life and erring and suffering like ourselves.

Mr Freer's courageous journey to Asia last year was an example to the country. It is the duty of public men to see the world for themselves if they can; the political parties ought to be sending interested members abroad regularly. Until they do so, only the public spirit of men like Mr Freer and the delegation to China will

mitigate the consequences of official ignorance, timidity and short-sightedness. And we should not rest content with the visit of one small group of people to China. As a next step, why not invite some eminent Chinese writers, artists, scholars and scientists to visit New Zealand?

CHARLES DOYLE

# *Starlings and History*

It is again time when the sleek and glossy starlings
Invade the lawn in their gentlemanly lemon
And black, the comical shakos of their beaks
Thrust forward. Under their clamorous murmuration
Summer has babbled in.

Oblivious, noisy creatures, they have heralded or
Said farewell to all the seasons of all my life.
I have seen them too on a grey slate roof,
Or commuting into trees alive with leaf,
Or dead on the dark road.

And now, now only, I mouth to myself and the glass,
'These are alive, too. Everything lives and moves,
Grows and has meaning.' I recall as I grope for meaning
How once, a boy in the slums, I loved those roofs'
Grey slate in the winter sky;

Brick houses underneath, dark-honeycombed
With little rooms; brass bedsteads and pedestals
Of mottled marble, and cracked linoleum;
In the yard a shower of orange blossom petals,
A path of powdery bricks;

Those Friday nights I listened to the one-man band,
Bass drum and barrel organ by the painted house

On the corner, where the old lady gave us sugar;
How for supper we always opened a tin of sardines
And were allowed to stay up late.

Such things are history or happiness,
The quarrel with ourselves, the self-renewal
Which Amiel demands of the living soul.
Man must embrace all meaning, even the cruel,
And carry it with the gentle.

Our corner of time and place, of muted suffering
And loud enjoyments, decked in the lewd, banal
Catchphrases, snapshots, comics and popular songs,
Though it must be, is all that we are, the final
Measure of us and all things,

Man's meaning and the world's. In the dead life of my life
I hear the children cry out among the bracken,
And the drowned one quiet, her desolate bucket and spade
Unkempt on the shore of our being, her parents stricken
To another death on the pier.

I see the priests in their cassocks and the wild honey
On the refectory table when mine was a golden eye;
Later the creaking hawser, eyes of the shorelights
Open, when I was cast adrift on the totalitarian sea
To discover another self.

From all the seas of my selves I wake and wonder
When the torture of knowing shakes my soul from its torpor,
Knowing that all must end in the unknown voyage
Out of the world of bricks and kicking and the lure
And deviltry of love.

Every eclectic marvellous detail,
Coarse Wiltshire stone under the caring hand,
Giant kauris aching upon the eye, every kind of love
And even pity and ceremony, must end
Between the quiet poles.

All I must leave to my sleep are dreams of being,
Anarchic in the Irish sea-blue eyes

Of my peasant forbears, and with my drunken uncle
Dreams of a poem, who have watched in my waking skies
Starlings and history.

Now I turn and find it is winter. The dreary birds
Make the grey air untidy, their rough-gutted screech
A hubbub that disturbs me. I suddenly know that all worlds
Are chequered and drab like these, that the promise of rich
Permanent summer is false.

Still there are seasons, summers, migrations,
Flowerings and rebirths. Even the hooded candles
Will gleam upon the reviving ceremonial.
Living and dying seem endless; nothing is endless.
One does not die forever.

# *The Halt*

JOHN CASELBERG

*You will see whole races of men on the great highway, going and returning, outward bound and homeward bound.*
W. MacNeile Dixon

I

THE vane of each separated jet-black primary feather arched, upraised and lifted and the hovering great bird soared. Circling, drifting and soaring on the updraft rising above the far-away limestone cliffs it felt the air swirl past its throbbing, hot, fat-enclosed feathered body: past the clamped hard beak and the whitish ceres and the yellow eyes; past the down- and covert-feather-padded neck and the wide, strong-boned, huge-muscled supporting breast; past its flanks and in-drawn feathered legs and iron talons sheathed now and under the wedge-shaped tail; curling from above its outstretched wings and thrusting, lifting under the wings.

The sun lit on the rufous-streaked feathers at the nape of its neck, staining them red, which changed to blood-red and gold when the sunlight struck in its eyes. And the wide-watching fierily-yellow eagle's eyes glared and gleamed and stared back into the sun . . . .

(All night it perched on the aerie, on the eight-foot-square platform of interlacing branches and sticks and leaves and long bark strips in the fork of the nala tree. In the depression previously made by the weight of its body when laying the eaglet nestled, surrounded by the mess of rats' and birds' bones and a half-eaten, half-rotten snake; huddled in the fresh smelling leaves in the centre of the nest.

The boughs creaked suddenly in the darkness, the tree's trunk quivered, and the upper limbs and branches shook back and forth. Startled, the eagle heard the rush of wind that raged over the desert in the night, blowing in from the far-away sea; felt sand stinging hard on its feathers; lifted its head and half-lifted one wing sheltering over the unfledged bird.

Before dawn the squall passed on. The eagle's wing dropped. It hopped round, turned to the squawking eaglet, and tore with its beak at the half-eaten snake, seizing strips of flesh which it dropped down the eaglet's throat.

As the first light came into the sky the eagle's eyes widened; it moved to the edge of the aerie; its talons like iron clutched tighter and its beak opened and closed and the cool dawn air drew into its body. The rounded pounding breast lifted high and the wings lifted and the pectoral- and flight-muscles spread and contracted, and shaking all the air and the nest and the tree its wide black wings flapped and flapped aloud on the morning.

The storm in its blood subsided and the wings sank resting. But the light grew brighter, flowing up from the horizon, flooding into its eyes. Again the dark body tensed, shook, strained skywards, and its shoulders rose lifting the wings that again flapped like a thunder-storm breaking. The talons loosened and the muscles snatched the wings swiftly forward upwards contracting high over its head and thrusting outstretched back and down and the thighs bunched and sprang and the air rushed in and out of its body and the great bird rose, flew out of the tree, above the cold plain and the cold, plundered carcase of its mate, its black tail stretched, its red heart racing, its dark wings whirling on and on and up into the empty vault of the sky where soon the sun itself would rise, blinding.)

## II

THE hot tongue wound her round and the giant teeth gripped her fast even as Erritja, the eagle-hawk, might grip its prey, and she lay limp, utterly helpless, atnuta, inside the slavering jowls of the great black beast. Onward, they bounded, over the hill of Iturka worra, the evil one, past the water-hole, quatcha laia; the dog leaving no trail either where its clawed gnoilya inka landed or where they leapt from. Its breath streamed and burned over her like a sandstorm, like rukaruba, the whirlwind; and somewhere in the gloom its hot heart boomed like the thunder-cloud. The huge haunches sprang on and on through the night. But dawn came breaking, as they reached the entrance to a cave, and the gnoilya dropped her suddenly and left her there on the bare ground and wheeled and disappeared into the black gaping entrance to the cave in the cliff.

She lay without moving. She could still see the light of Beera, the moon, and Kattang-ga, the desert stars; but as she watched they grew steadily paler. It was ingwuntagwunta, the morning before sunrise.

The cold of the desert night hung like a blanket down on the plain, warring, as it were, with the small stick fire, shivering over the exposed parts of her body that were turned away from the fire, penetrating at her bare loins. She drew up her knees closer, and moved her body in the small hollow of dry earth, the chocolate-brown, near black, sun- and rain- and wind-beaten skin of her body feeling the earth warm underneath her. She lifted her arm from the naked child huddled at her breast, picked two mulga sticks from the bundle at her side, pushed them end-first into the flames and drew the child back from the scorching flames close in to herself. Nabbari, the boy, still slept, curled round the other side of the fire.

She stared at the yellow and red flames rising from the hot, slow-burning hard mulga wood. Weeloo, the stone-curlew, flew somewhere overhead, crying: its loud, haunting, plaintive cry echoed over the plain. Behind her, mingari moved softly in the bushes, beginning already his daily search for minga, the black ant: mingari, the horned, spiny mountain-devil, who in the dream-times had been a woman, a woman who had never guri-arra with a man; who travelled always alone or with other women guarded by big, savage dogs to guard them from the men. She shivered.

She pushed the glowing end of the black mulga stick further into the flames and thought of Lungkartikukana, her man, her

husband, anua: Lungkartikukana of the booming voice: Lungkartikukana . . . .

(For a week after the rain the dry sand had been a garden, verdant with pale-green swaying buck-bush. Now the bushes were all dead. Near a rock, she watched a single brown withered plant bend in the wind. The wind came in a sharp gust, and she saw the brittle stem snap, the shallow-rooted plant whip away, the dry stems and wizened narrow leaves shiver and pulverize as they struck on the rock; and saw the little swirl as they disappeared, leaving only a tiny carpet of winged seeds on the again bare scorched sand.

Lungkartikukana came into the camp. She looked at his glistening body: at the long slim legs, small buttocks and dark penis not covered by the ornamental swinging alpita made of Talgoo's, the rabbit bandicoot's, shining, bundled, silky white tail-hairs; at his muscled abdomen and hair-matted chest and sinewy arms; at the strong throat and the beard hiding his great jaws and at his black shadowed eyes and his ochred, shining, wavy black hair.

The sun glared from a brazen sky. She continued pouring the small black and brown munyeru seeds from one mulga pitchi to another, winnowing them in the strong wind. He had brought no game. He stood, holding his spear, in the welcome leaf shadow of the tall white gum, looking up from the camp at the red cliffs.

The Raitchawa was up there. Lungkartikukana left the camp, walking quickly on his hard bare feet through the creek bed and past the trunks of the white gums, up over the rocks and bushes, going easily, swiftly, up the cliff. She lost him in the fire of Tchintu, the sun.

He reached the Raitchawa, who squatted on a rock; who glowered at him from under his old, white-whiskered, bony brow-ridges; whose terrible eyes had glared down on him earlier that morning —as he had followed a kangaroo trail far below on the plain—, had glared at him and commanded from afar off for him to come; who turned away now and stared southwards from that brow of the mountains over the plain.

'Koorda kombinya?' the Raitchawa said. Lungkartikukana assented. They were the words running through his own mind; the feeling he had had all morning: koorda kombinya: heart getting hot. It was time to leave the camp and travel off. They squatted together on the headland of purplish hard sandstone, looking out at the empty, almost waterless, dry sandhills and sandy desert plain stretching endlessly to the south. Below them, right under the cliff,

lay a small rock-pool, margined with reeds and green ferns; where several small fish swam and little frogs sheltered under the stones; overhung by a fig-tree and a white and yellow flowering tecoma. The Raitchawa drew with black charcoal on the rock, idly; not a sacred drawing. The marks he made showed the body of an emu standing over the ground. With white pipe-clay he drew the lines of the breast, and the tail, and two feet, each with three toes. He made an oval-shaped charcoal mark and outlined it with pipe-clay: one egg. A series of lines showed where the bird walked round its nest. Then the Raitchawa marked some broad dark arrows leading out from the nest, along the rock, to the edge of the rock, pointing over the plain. It was enough. He, Lungkartikukana, was an emu, of the emu-knanja, the emu-totem. He put his hand on the now moistened rock while the Raitchawa blew from his mouth powdered ochre, making, leaving behind on the rock, the mark of the hand. Far away, lifted above the shimmer of the horizon, two pale purple ovoid shapes lay discernible in the pale sky: Oolra and Kuttatuta, the two blood-red tors.

Lungkartikukana told her of this when he came down. They left the camp that afternoon. Lungkartikukana went first, walking upright, easily, carrying his spear-thrower amera, two eight-foot-long throwing single-barbed spears, and a nulla-nulla throwing-stick in the human-hair band wound round his waist. He wore a new feather chilara on his forehead, glistening white against his black hair; his wallet, tied to the waist-band, containing always, she knew, a small sharp rock flint, a merloo tendon, a piece of yellow ochre, a wad of chewing pituri and some eagle-hawk down; his white nose-bone; a ringlet of fur-string bands holding red and white tufts of feathers on his upper arm; a final coating on his skin of grease and red ochre; and the shaking alpita. Munnerin, the Raitchawa, followed: he had asked to come. Now, from behind, with his spindly legs and the white hair trailing from his shoulders and matted on his back, stooping, he looked harmless and old; but she knew, when he lifted his head, how the fear of him made her tremble. When she saw the wide high nose and the hollow at the root of his nose and his high forehead and white brows; and, underneath the brows, when she saw, looking at her, the eagle eyes that could see into the souls of all animals and plants and women and men and command strange spirits and send out, even, spirit dogs to distant people, enquiring into their minds and haunting their dreams—she shivered. She followed Munnerin, her calloused feet falling softly on the hot sand, moving with the tall flowing beauty of the women of her tribe. She carried two

large pitchi, her four-foot-long mulga digging-stick, which she had freshly sharpened at one end by charring in the fire; and her wirra, a shallow wood scoop; and wore, vivid on her dark body, hundreds of the flaming red bean-tree seeds that had been traded down from the north, that she had pierced with a fire-stick and threaded on the long string of hair coiled now across her back, around her neck, and under each breast and arm. With her went the boy, laughing, still a child; whom often she would have to carry, either on her shoulder or straddle-legged on her hip as she walked.

She looked back at the camp; at their month-old mia-mia of mallee branches; at the oknirabata, the very wise old men, who had given Munnerin message-sticks for a southern tribe, who squatted now on their haunches watching the departure; and at the delicate ghost-tree gums whose trunks stood chalky white in the slanting rays of the sun and whose leafy branches shook and danced, brilliantly green against the red cliffs and the surrounding sand.

The plants of the creek-bed died and the creek-bed itself died away in the brown sand. Again looking back, she saw the sun stream on the great headland, which stood now dusky-red over all the plain—from where, northward, could be seen the piled-up mountain ranges of that Arunta territory; to the north-west, the desert plain stretching out endlessly north and west beyond the horizon, beyond the limits of any kinsman's journey; and, east and west, the long precipitous cliff faces, jutting into the desert, standing now sentinel against the encroaching desert—; which in the dreamtimes, in the far-distant alchera, had buttressed, and been beaten by, the waves of a vast salt sea.

She turned, following in the steps of Lungkartikukana and Munnerin, in the steps of the alchera ancestors who had walked through making the features of this land; passing a patch of mallee scrub on which bright scarlet mistletoe flowered.

The sun sank flaming as they walked into the sand-ridges. A belt of dark mulga raised its sharp-pointed intertwined branches to snatch at her body and start their festering sores; but the sunset touched each small curled flake of bark on the stems and branches with orange-red stains, and outlined each bush with a round-shaped halo of light, so that she forgot their barbs. Then the rich after-glow sank from the sky, and the mulga branches stood out sharp and thin in the sky, which turned, at the horizon to cold steel-blue and to an ultramarine dome overhead speckled with stars; and the light faded, and the horizon disappeared, and the

cold, fresh new wind came and blew on their faces as they stopped for the night. Later, in the night, she heard the four whining cries of Rool, the sacred kingfisher, the solitary one, the bird of death, dropping down through the sky.)

As she looked up, away from the fire, the dawn was brightening. The ridges were etched darkly on the horizon and the scent of far-away mulga plains blew on the cold air. The Morning Star still hung like a flame in the east, harbinger of the sun. Involuntarily the Song of the Morning Star rose in her throat. But even as she watched the brilliance of the great star faded.

Today they would go down from the jumbled ridges to meet Wonambi, the huge man-eating snake, who long ago had thrown up Gondiri, Nullabor, this giant plain; of whom they had heard far away in the north in her own land; who even now guarded its water-holes and stood sometimes upright and threatening to the top of the sky; who haunted women's dreams, getting them often with child: the waijela's Wonambi, who rushed fierce, black and spitting fire over the plain; from whom they would get food scraps and scraps of clothing; but whom she feared and hated for its treachery, for its appetite, for the waijela's disease it carried, for taking and killing so many stranger-people who also came to it for sustenance, drawn for ever from their own land, and for taking Lungkartikukana.

She turned again to the fire . . . .

(At night the tiny black ants crawling incessantly, pricking, over her body were a torture to her.

They had camped near a grove of desert oaks, whose dark, leafless branches of stiff green twigs drooped motionless, melancholic and brooding, in the early dawn. When the sun rose their rugged trunks stood ebony black against the red sand.

They came to the first water rock-hole, Kurtitima, set in a limestone outcrop amongst that wilderness of sand-ridges. At the base of a curving fissue, deep, sunless, and narrow, just wide enough for one person to turn in, lay a deposit of black mud. Spinifex grass grew at the edge, thin circles of yellow barbed stems surrounding brown centres, enclosing their shrivelled dead hearts.

Past the end of a solitary sandstone rock-ridge, again through barren sandhills, they reached Unterpata, another deep hole set in limestone on a small white flat dotted with ti-tree bushes. Several dead gnoilya dingoes lay decaying and putrid in the hole.

The next brilliant morning found her shaking drops of dew from

the bushes into her wirra; and with her digging-stick unearthing mallee roots, long, swollen, and spongy with moisture.

As they travelled she would gather the flattened mulga apples and the round nutritious oily fruit of the quandong tree, and seeds of grasses, and the rich witchetty grubs, and beetles and lizards and sometimes yarumpa, the tasty honey ant; while Lungkartikukana and Munnerin watched always for arura, the grey kangaroo, or merloo, the red kangaroo, or kumala, the red and white euro, or kooracardie and nyntucka, the bright-coloured purple and yellow-, and black and yellow-backed goannas.

They approached Underappa, a clay pan, where thousands of budgerigars rose, filling the sky with a green flashing of wings, and wheeled and circled and swept over their heads; where Tcheereeree, the large cicadas, hung on the bushes, some silent, with pale smoky-grey bodies and a tracery of green on their transparent wings, others singing, changed into their rich red-brown colourings, with splashes of scarlet on their small flanks and jet-black crescentic markings below; where many acres of yellow clay contained the bodies of millions of apus, the long-tailed crab-like crustacean; and where, at the lowest part, a pool of warm milky water shone in the sunlight, held by a few inches of clay from soaking into the sand underneath. She ran with the others into the warm mud and drank, tasting the water in her mouth deliciously sweet. They all drank deeply, copiously.

Afterwards they lay in the water, and she pushed Nabbari, the boy, under the water and splashed Lungkartikukana and laughed and felt the water exciting and refreshing all over her limbs. They took some frogs from Underappa: she still remembered their golden upper parts and legs, mottled with green; their pale bellies and yellow-brown sides and pink toes; and, before they were killed, the ebony pupils that stared out from their orange-red eyes. The living apus lay with dark-red eyes, their soft bright-red blood-filled swimmerets beating backwards and forwards incessantly through the water, stirring the water into tiny waves.

During the morning thin wisps of cloud had floated up from the south over the horizon, grown slowly nearer and larger and coalesced at last into billowing white clouds, which mounted steadily and glared over the plain. Now they seethed higher, grew darker and met overhead in a continuous long pall; casting a shadow as the hand of maamu-waddi rose over the sun. A silence and expectancy, a half-gloom, lay over the land. But in mid-afternoon, when Lungkartikukana led them from Underappa, the

curtain broke slowly apart and the clouds withdrew the way they had come.

She saw Lungkartikukana in front stiffen and pause, his head bent to the ground, his spear-thrower drawn back with his right arm and his spear held firmly in his out-swung left hand. He turned swiftly, at right angles to the direction of their travel, and disappeared through the scrub, his eyes searching the ground both at his feet and ahead for signs of the red kangaroo.

He came up to them later, when they had made camp, with the merloo bundled over his shoulders. They scooped a hollow then in the sand, built a large fire, and prepared for their feast. Lungkartikukana cut through the merloo's coat with the sharp stone flake, fixed with porcupine-grass gum to the base of his amera. He cleaned the lower end of the leg tendon away from the bone, took a hitch of the tendon around her digging-stick, held the carcase with his foot and pulled slowly, steadily, until the upper end of the tendon gave way and he could draw it out from the flesh; took the loose end in his mouth, fully stretching the tendon, and cut the lower attachment with his stone knife; and carefully extracted and rolled up and stowed away in his wallet the valuable tendon, which, dampened, becomes pliant and on drying contracts, exerting its tension; which would be used for fixing a point to the end of spear or spear-thrower, or to bind a splicing on to the shaft of a spear. He made a small incision with the flake in the abdominal wall of the merloo, drew out the pale moist intestines, and cut them from their anterior and posterior connections. These he passed to her: she took them, cleaned away any fast faeces, turned them over and over in the hot sand and, later, in the ashes of the fire, and shared them out with Nabbari and Munnerin. Munnerin, who had taken the other leg tendon, was given, and similarly treated, some of the soft glands, the tastiest morsels. Lungkartikukana fastened the two abdominal flaps with a wood skewer, cut off the tail at the stump, broke, with his amera, the fore-paws and strong hind legs, and lifted and dropped the carcase into the ashes. They left it for an hour, with hot ashes piled over to singe the red fur. Then Lungkartikukana took it up from the hollow sand-oven, placed it on the arranged small leafy mallee branches, and portioned it out. He extended the initial cut, handed the heart and liver to Munnerin, and, using the sharp digging-stick and his teeth, carved the animal into rough joints. In the growing darkness they ate the rich juice-filled rare meat by the light of their fires.

The mulga ended. They journeyed on into the region of parallel

sand-ridges, many of them a hundred feet high, dotted with tussocks of porcupine-grass. To their right, she knew, stretched the silent flat waterless expanse of the dread lake, which had been touched for ever by the spirit of death; where no bird or animal moved or sounded, broke the stillness of those vast white wastes of salt covering the black mud; which baked in the fierce sunlight day after day through the centuries and cracked, cold as death, every night; where no man or woman of her race dared ever venture; where now, perhaps, death itself need no longer venture.

As they toiled on, the ridges grew taller, their crests steeper, and their troughs closer together. All day they ascended and descended; all day a dank salt foul air blew from the north-west, off the lake; and throughout the day, from the crests of the higher sand-ridges, Oolra, the rock tor, grew larger in the sky and redder and redder at every mile. They topped the last sand-ridge as the sun went down, finding themselves separated by a two-mile sea of dark green mulga from Oolra itself, from the crimson Rock. A new wind blew from the direction of the Rock.

To the west, twenty miles distant, Kuttatuta raised its five vertical towers into an orange sky, lit as if by some magic fire from within, glowing motionless and luminous, rose-pale and pale-blue, with frail colours and shapes wavering like the flowers and flames of a region of enchantment apart from the earth; flowering delicately and flaming in alkira aldorla, the western sky.

From a shallow basin of yellow sand in front of them, the solitary vast Rock rose precipitous, a colossus of granite joining the earth and the sky, compact, bare, domed, enflamed by the evening sun, its scarlet and crimson mass slashed with purple where rain-torn clefts lay in deep shadow. Lungkartikukana and Munnerin held their weapons alert, and she clutched Nabbari tighter. They had seen tracks of the Larapinta people, whom they knew were encamped under Oolra; and now smelled the smoke of their fires. The sky turned steely and the stars emerged and disappeared and the burnished Rock darkened as they, she and the two men and the boy, moved forward and entered its stretching night-shadow; as they entered the wind-scoured hollows at its base, and saw the black holes weathered far up on its glistening smooth flanks, and looked up at the great storm-gouged skull of Oolra, their ancestor, now fantastically twisted and dark, his lower jaw still attached, gripping shut, set there sentinel since the dreamtimes commanding all life down below on the plain; as she looked shudderingly at the sky-reaching outsplit column of rock, the lingam, from which all women were forever forbidden, which

was a character, a symbol and an abode of Twanyirrika, the dreadful spirit, a symbol of all the mystery and ferocity and power of that land; as they saw the fires dwarfed under the Rock and the stranger men came running, armed, brandishing their weapons and crying; and as Lungkartikukana thrust his beard in his mouth dancing madly, his knees beating high up, pounding his feet on the sand, swirling his arms and spear and spear-thrower and lifting his great voice echoing and reverberating along under the cliffs its high-pitched welcoming sounds.

That night they camped by the side of a water-hole, in an opening hollowed out in the face of the rock, close to a clump of graceful, drooping, weeping acacias and several white-stemmed gums. Through a chasm above, a few stars shone brilliantly in a patch of visible sky. They sat round their fires, and the Larapinta shared out equally with them their day's food of goanna fat and rock-wallaby. Afterwards, two old men moved into the centre of the group; Nabbari was put quietly with the other children, his usual irrepressible laughter and play not countenanced now; the elders chatted, smiling together; and the firelight lit their faces and bodies and threw wavering black shadows, further darkening the blue-black sky and the watching night ringed beyond the rim of the fires.

The old men beat time on the ground with their short sticks and began the high-pitched note which all, men and women, unfalteringly, precisely, took up, following the dreamtimes-old wavering rhythm down to a lower soft whispering note, repeating for hour after hour with subtle differences of intensity and pitch the clanging, nostalgic, sorrowful and glad passionate songs of her race.

In the night she dreamt that Erritja, an eaglehawk, was leading them over the plain.

The next morning, after she had found the small round holes in the sand made by yarumpa, the honey ant, and dug swiftly downward, loosening the earth with her digging stick, throwing it over her shoulder with her scoop, making a hole wide enough for her body and reaching down six feet to the nest; as she picked out the swollen honey-storer ants, bulbous as pale grapes, some of which she took, breaking their abdomens with her teeth, tasting them nectar-sweet in her mouth; as she looked up at the great red sides of the Rock and at the black entrances to the caves higher up, the spirit places, that stretched far back into the unknown dark interior, where wallabies, bats, opossums and rodents lived but which none of her people dared ever explore; as she saw the

dark clouds mounting higher and higher in the sky—the shadow of Erritja passed over her. Soon after, she had pains, and knew that in the night an Erritja kuruna, an age-old eaglehawk spirit from the dreamtimes, had entered through her loins and was now forming a ratappa, a baby, inside her. She ran to tell Lungkartikukana she was with child.

The clouds shut out the sun and rolled up louring over all the sky.

In the late afternoon she crouched with Nabbari and Lungkartikukana and Munnerin in a cave under the Rock, staring out at the gloom, hearing her own and the others' breathing in the silence that lay like the giant hand over all things holding them still; hearing, as she glanced at the sacred red hand drawn on the rock wall, coming from afar off, the distant rising awful moan of the wind. The rukaruba came relentlessly on, swelling, raising its sound to a roar and then a terrible shriek as it struck at the Rock, broke through its crevices and gaps, whipped sand through the caves, and tore bushes and grasses and trees in its frenzy. Then lightning flamed and lashed overhead, splintering weird pinnacles, branding the Rock and the earth with livid raw weals; and the thunder burst, booming, reverberating, pealing louder and louder into cataracts of sound that overwhelmingly deafened the hearers and that accumulating seemed ready to overwhelm, rend, crack, shiver even Oolra to pieces; and the cataracts of rain that precipitated like rivers over the hard dome fell in white sheets streaming and masking its sun-baked red walls as if Oolra were no more than a pebble caught again in an ancient sea.)

The approaching sun pushed a shower of golden light into the sky, slowly lifted its molten rim at the horizon, dazzled her and rose clear, shedding a new warm brilliance over the plain. She saw it fall on Nabbari and felt it glowing over her body. Turning her face now up to the sky she thought of the maala-drive held in the midday glare south of Oolra . . . .

(Leaving the Rock, they had passed through scattered trees and mulga flats and sandhill belts, the grasses becoming progressively scarcer as they journeyed southwards.

During the morning she had noticed tracks of the rabbit-like maala. Now the men stopped, on a tussock- and scrub-covered plain. Lungkartikukana squatted on the ground, twirling his firestick, in a minute lighting firebrands with which he and Munnerin started two fires to leeward of the southerly wind. The flames

spread slowly at first, eating back in a wide crescent of fire into the wind, crackling in the munyeru grass, leaping from one large clump of spinifex to the next and engulfing in a sudden rush the yellow spinifex flower-stalks that were tall as a man, driving a column of black and white smoke swirling over the sun. The sun turned orange, blood-shot, in the sky, as the men added to the horns of the crescent of fire by hurling lighted firebrands across fifty paces into the soon exploding enflamed vegetation, and stood, danced, in their bare feet, sometimes on the needle-sharp, needle-hard spinifex barbs, twirling their throwing-sticks eagerly, waiting for maala. When the maala emerged their arms would whip back and the nulla-nulla throwing-sticks would hurtle curving through the shimmering heat- and smoke-filled air to the kill. Then, far in advance of the wide arc of leeward fires, they lit the windward fire, a straight wall of flame, and stood back and followed through the ash-hot charred ground as smoke belched higher and higher and flames spouted skywards and the two great fires rushed steadily together; as to the roar of the leeward fire was added the thunderous menacing boom, boom of falling mulga and corkwood engulfed, stricken, crashing down and consumed in the windward fire; as they faced a world full of flame and smoke and huge sounds and almost unbearable heat of which they, Lungkartikukana and Munnerin, were never aware. Their breathing was short and quick and they swung from foot to foot and twirled and twirled the nulla-nulla in their hands and stared through the flames; and the tall, powerful body of Lungkartikukana and Munnerin's spindly but rock-hard trunk and limbs rippled like ebony, flexing, glistening, as they stood, danced, watched, threw, ran, cried out with black fire in their great eyes kindling, glowing, exulting and out-flaming even the land's flames.)

The sun beat warmly down on them now. She stood up, lifting the still-sleeping round-bellied three-year-old girl carefully in her arms. Nabbari also slept, uncurled from the fire, his small limbs stretched out, relaxed on the ground. The long clear musical tu-tu-tu-tu song of Nyandi sounded over the ridge. Looking up, she noticed the male bird, chestnut-backed, pale-breasted in the sunlight, perched with upstretched throat on a spinifex bush. She added to the fire: the fire must not go out; and walked away, slowly, from the fire and the sleeping boy to the top of the ridge, where she saw the hen bird running shyly from tussock to tussock on her strong legs; where she followed the bird's tracks leading to and fro eventually to the spinifex bush on which its nest had

been built. Crouching beside the nest made with intertwining thin grasses and the massed, curled, jointed, long thin leaves of spinifex stems, peering through the small entrance down on one side, she saw Nyandi's three eggs, warm in their bed of vegetable down, delicately flecked with rose-red and amber and grey and gleaming white in a ray of the sun. The hen bird scuttled fearfully backwards and forwards while the male rufous grass wren changed his call into an excited rippling song and his startled brown eyes shone, diminutively fierce. She left the eggs: today they would meet, and get food from, Wonambi.

She looked back at Nabbari; then went on, making few tracks, down to the hollow from where she could see across the plain to the silver strip along which Wonambi would roar; where the flies hung already stinging about her in their every-day cloud; but where she sat by a stranger thornbush—she had feared it, moon-yooin, at first, but so far it had brought them no harm—, from whose small five-petalled fan-shaped white flowers a sweet scent reached her nostrils, and stirred her lassitude and soothed her hot heart by stirring and soothing all her senses with its unaccustomed fragrance . . . .

(She was little more than a girl. Surrounded by a great ring of hills, camped on different sides of the creek, both sections of her tribe had collected to hold the Engwura quabara ceremonies: the only Engwura she had attended; the only Engwura she or any others of her race would ever now attend. The section of the tribe to which she belonged was camped, with its related section, under shade-giving ironwood trees, whose dense rounded top-branches shone brilliantly green after the rain. Through the tidja scrub on the other side of the creek-bed, beneath the purria gums, she saw at night the fires of the Purula and Kumala sections, the other half of the tribe. She learnt which were the fires on the men's camping ground, and peeped each evening at them through the trees. She lived in terror of all movements down on the ceremonial ground, where the oknirabata initiated the young men into the awful mysteries of the spirit people whom they summoned back from the dreamtimes. And she shuddered fearfully whenever the bull-roarer spirit noises of Twanyirrika, the dread spirit, wailed and boomed through the hills in the night. But she took strength from the glimmerings of the Purula and Kumala fires, knowing that a Purula man sitting there now would one day become her husband: to only a Purula could she be wived.

One afternoon she collected, with the other older girls and the

women, scrub for a fire and tussocks for firebrands, and in the evening the two women's sections lit their two fires. When the young men came through the darkness with their shields and leafy branches, she ran at them excitedly, crying out, with the other women throwing her firebrands, unable to see the men properly, trying to hit their fleeing backs, shouting at the runaways, pursuing them almost to the creek-bed and chasing them away.

At the first streak of light in the east the glistening decorated spirit pole, in and around which countless spirits of birds and plants and beasts and of her ancestors assembled, was erected, and the young men formed up in a solid square facing them, facing the waiting women. She was no longer afraid, feeling the excitement that quivered through all the women, staring at the men as the square approached, not knowing which were Purula men, bending her knees and moving her hands up and down and muttering, calling, kutta-kutta, kutta-kutta, inviting them forward. Then the leaders threw themselves on the ground and the young men climbed on top, making a mound of bodies, lying motionless, silent, as she stood with the women breathlessly scanning the pile of bodies and half-hidden faces. The square broke up and the young men returned quietly.

All that night fires burned on the ceremonial ground as the young men decorated each other carefully, intricately, with red and yellow ochre and white pipe-clay and charcoal and eagle-hawk down; while she gathered dry branches and tussocks and helped scoop, with her wirra, a hollow in the ground. Throughout the night the old men, unseen, would call out 'What are you doing?'; and she would answer through the trees with the others, 'We are making a fire'.

The next morning at daybreak they started their fires. The young men were fully decorated and she heard the whrr! whrr! of their cries as they ran round and round the tall spirit pole. Then, with the oknirabata leading, clasping hands, the whole party came running towards her. They stopped fifty paces away.

Again she called kutta-kutta and swayed her body and arms and with the other women excitedly beckoned the men on. Then each old man ran forward leading his young men in a semi-circle up to them and back from them and she trembled inside and half turned away and saw shyly through the corner of her eye his black eyes fixed on her and she looked straight at Lungkartikukana. The fire crackled, feverishly she threw on more green branches, and the old man again brought up his charges, this time right to

the fires, where the young men knelt on the branches; where she was ready with the other women to touch his shoulders—decorated with the strange and beautiful red and white symbols of his ancestors and of his kindred, the long-legged, swift-as-the-wind emu, and of his spirit place in the dreamtimes—and press down on him—who had been tested and found not wanting and proved at last, now, above the crackling fire under her shaking hands, to be a man—and feel the bone hard on his shoulders and smell the smoke spurt suddenly blowing up hot on her face, smothering her.

That night she dreamt of another quabara ceremony, in which Lungkartikukana emerged slowly from the dark blood-painted spirit pole, then stood alongside it, now leader himself of the Engwura ceremonies. She watched his tall dark decorated body kneel on the ground and slowly, regularly, raise and lower the spirit pole; saw his beard and the shaking white alpita; and saw, too, what no other watching man or woman or child could see: from the flat shell lonka lonka attached to his ears a glimmer of light reflected the fires. As he moved his arms up and down the lonka lonka shook, shone, and dazzled out suddenly a flash of light that stabbed through the darkness, over the scrub and the creek-bed, to her, to where she stood resting her hand on the smooth ghostly bark of the purria tree, reaching her alone, flooding over her eyes, blinding her, and penetrating to the deep essence of her, where it started a whimper from her bowels and shook her heart and fired her blood with joy and the need of him; where she thrilled, thrilled until her eyes shone like the lonka lonka in the darkness and her breasts hardened and heaved with her breathing and she was okunjepunna oknirra: she loved him.

And all through the night Lungkartikukana squatted alone in a small hollow far from the camp, leaning his back on the ironwood tree, singing over a small red and white jeemari stone which he had shaped during the day, and which he had covered with his own totem markings. He sang softly, crooning, holding the jeemari stone, the magic namatwinna, in the palm of his hand, hearing the night noises of lizards and insects and mammals and birds, of Wonambi, a snake—all of whose tracks he would read and whose story he could tell in the morning—, hearing the land come to life in the darkness, aware of the pulse of the land. He sang quabara songs, songs of women, and he sang of ancestral lovers and of the great lovers who had gone up into the sky and become stars; and, as he sang, the desert stars moved over the sky. As the dawn came up at last in the east he stood up and cut his arm and

let blood drop on the namatwinna; and when a stain of red mounted the sky he took the human-hair string tied to the namatwinna love-emblem, and swung it so that it struck on the rock of the ground and whirled and whirled through the air; so that it hummed and lifted a clear singing call up from that spot through the hills over the basin in the hills across the creek-bed to where she lay asleep in the Bultara women's mia-mia, reaching no man and no other woman, sounding softly, wonderfully, dawning in her ears, in her blood, as she woke from the dream and heard the sound and saw the light of the morning.

In the morning the old men carried the blood-darkened spirit pole up through the dull-grey and brown-green mulga, over the red rocks, past the yellow-flowering spinifex, to the top of the hill where they left it, tabu; where the place itself became tabu, unapproachable for many moons; where the sun would draw the sap up from the pole and bleach it white and the white ants would come out of the ground, burrowing into its wood, eating it away until nothing remained.

* * * *

At the train—where she stood further away behind him hardly able to stop the fear shaking her limbs, afraid of the stench of the white people, terrified by the stench and the sight and the sound of the monster—Lungkartikukana proffered the man his nulla-nulla: the long curved mulga throwing-stick that had killed many maala and Nyiri-nyiri, the swift finches, and even the monarch bird, Erritja, the eagle-hawk who soared over all men and all secret places and over all the hills and the plain. The bare-faced flaccid waijela man held out a small silver threepence; Lungkartikukana shook his head; and the man nodded, grinned, and took the nulla-nulla. The Wonambi-snake screamed and she cried out and the white man jumped back on the train and threw them a penny and his pig's eyes jeered at them and she saw Lungkartikukana go mad. She saw his nostrils widen and the veins knot on his forehead and his teeth bare white and his black eyes blaze and the muscles tremor up and down his back; and saw him bending dive to the ground and grip in his hard black hand the hard rock that he swung and hurled, whipping upright, as Wonambi jerked, slid away: the Gondiri rock that had hardened in the sea of the dreamtimes and weathered on the plain and that she saw now hurtling with fragmented glass and its own

impelled adamant and velocity crashed into the horrible, smashed, blood-streaming waijela's formerly bloodless face.

* * * *

After the waijela men came and took Lungkartikukana away from her she had received one message-stick, which told her he had caught the waijela's disease and was kept on an island.

The message-stick was brought to her by Balieri, whose face was furrowed and scarred and who had lost one arm faction-fighting—it had been speared and broken with an amera. He had lain in the scrub by his fire for several days, and when the arm had gone rotten, he had burned it off at the stump—; who had been on the island himself, returning half-blind and half-lunatic.

When Balieri went totally blind she and Nabbari fed him and led him down to the train, where his deformed wasted body attracted the waijela's attention and collected for them many food scraps and occasional small coins. She hated the Wonambi-train and the waijela with all the bitterness of her soul, but she had nowhere else to go and no other place to get food. Behind her lay years of journeying through hostile land, where she dared not venture without Lungkartikukana or Munnerin. Even here she was surrounded by the hostile spirits of a territory to which she did not belong. At night, after they had returned from the train, after she had eaten some of the bread crusts or the orange-peel that had been thrown from the carriage-windows, she would sit alone for hours without a fire and set up her hideous death-wail, disturbing the dread uneasy night with her keening.

One night she woke in a terrible storm to find Balieri missing. She pictured his evil blind face and knew he had the murder-lust on him.

But Balieri was wandering through the scrub, and when the lightning tore at the scrub and the thunder cracked over his head and the hailstones beat down on him, and when he thought of all the evil spirits abroad in the night, stirring the elements now, wreaking their vengeance on him, he cried out and began to run, screaming, with a foam on his lips, blindly, staring out of the great holes in his skull that were his disease-ravaged eyes, stumbling over rocks and flailing his one arm at the scrub and breaking through thorn-bush and mulga that in the eternal night to which he was subject felt like a million demons tearing his shrunk body to pieces. He rushed through some newly-broken green branches

and he knew, then, that he had trampled through a fresh grave. And the spirit of the dead woman rose up in fury at the violation and thumped on his chest and smothered over his face and hissed at him: 'You must die in a strange country, too, for you have broken my shelter while my soul still sat there.' But he fled on and on until he came to the shelter where she and Nabbari lay. And they heard the maamu, the ghost of the dead woman, pursuing him, calling and coaxing him back, crying and moaning hideously about him; so that they clutched each other and covered their heads and faces with branches and stopped up their ears. Balieri slumped on the ground, his breath rasping and shuddering in great gasps, gibbering to himself. The wind tore at the mia-mia shelter and the lightning lit up his blood-dripping body and the black holes of his eyes and his slavering jowls, and the thunder pealed and pealed fiendishly overhead, and in the roof of the mia-mia the maamu suddenly screeched. They heard Balieri jump to his feet and run outside, crying 'maamu, maamu', and run round and round the mia-mia in ever-widening circles, falling over rocks and bushes but always rising to the call of the ghost, his long-drawn weeping screaming 'maamu, maamu, MA-AMU' cries fading and drowned at last in the sounds of the storm as he rushed in wider and wider circles following the maamu through the storm and the night to the place where the maamu chose he would die.

With the first breath of dawn she left Nabbari. The storm had passed, and the tops of the distant ridges rose clear and brightening against a clear pale sky.

She walked carefully, covering her tracks as well as she was able, carrying her child and a fire-stick, crossing sand-ridge after sand-ridge for several miles.

As the sun rose she stopped in a deep hollow, lit a fire, sat on the ground and suckled the three-year-old child. The girl looked up at her at first with smiling black eyes and made the noise of her enjoyment, her tongue pressing up to her palate and clicking on the right side of her mouth, nodding her small head. As she bent her head over the child, as the sun flooded over them both, she felt the hot sweet milk stirring and tingling and streaming gently from her thin pendulous breast.

She left the child on the sand by the fire and went on, to another desolate hollow hidden even further away. There she lit a second fire, squatting down to wait. The pains had come on her at the train, after Lungkartikukana had smashed the white man's face: she knew, then, that a Wonambi-kuruna, a snake-child, was growing inside her.

The sun rose higher. From the east the soundless wings of a giant wedge-tailed eagle, Erritja, cast their shadow over the land. Then she rested her buttocks on her heels and pressed her breath and the live ratappa was born, without a cry, and the blood ran into the ground and she dried herself by the fire and ate the ratappa; whose kuruna-spirit would return unharmed to the dream-times and be born again, later, in some other child.)

She looked up at the ridge over which Nabbari would soon appear and turned, shielding her eyes from the sun, looking out over the yellow-red plain, past the Wonambi track, out to the shimmering horizon, towards the sea: to the sea she had never beheld but that she knew had helped Wonambi to throw up this plain; that even now cried all day and all night and pounded and broke itself on the far-away battlement cliffs of Gondiri, of this plain . . . .

(Balieri had told her of the island where men and women were kept in the hospital and in rows of white tents: men and women of her own race, some of them the last representatives of their totem, some, even, the last of their tribe, all of them stricken with disease and parted from their land and their families, with the desire of life gone out of them, wasting, dying, or lingering on with memories and pain as their only constant companions. They were afraid of the hospital, of its daily injections and probings and dressings and the hot baths that withered the skin on their bodies—which were accustomed to cleansing only by grease, wind, sunlight and rain—until the skin shrivelled like tissue-paper and lifted in sheets and left the flesh raw and festering beneath; they were afraid of the spirit-haunted natural features of the island and of the howling and booming sea; and they were afraid of Kuddimukna, the dread spirit, whose presence was worse than solitude or fear or pain or death and whose realm, whose abode, was the island and the surrounding sea. They had been uprooted and poisoned by the white man's magic and they could push down no new roots, draw no fresh life up into their bodies, call no magic powerful enough to counteract that which opposed them. She pictured them: some, huddled alone in the bushes, weeping all day and all night in the agony of their grief; others, whimpering with pain and crawling away into the bushes to die; others, still, avoiding all creatures, avoiding each other as strangers and avoiding even the gulls and the cormorants that swept overhead and screeched in the sky, roaming continually in all weathers, in the

burning sun or in the darkest night or through the most violent storms, wandering restlessly over the island like the spirits of the wandering unquiet dead. And she pictured Lungkartikukana, standing for hours on a wind-torn rock headland, his head bent in the wind, motionless, like graven rock, with spray from the waves breaking below wet on his beard, with hollowed grey cheeks, staring out of the glowering sockets of his eyes with helpless black eyes that were dark as the storm-dark night, cold as the sea on the rocks, weary and old as the rocks themselves, across a savage always moaning tempestuous sea; deprived of his chilara and alpita, his withered body tied up and his maleness withered, hidden in rags, deprived of his wife and children and spears and amera and nulla-nulla and creatures to kill and land to hunt for them in, outcast, cut off, deprived of his intellect, his power, his blood and his seed, emasculated from life, sick unto death and sick, sick, sick with the dread of death; staring over the shark-filled sea that was a barrier to his life and across which, after death, not even his spirit could pass, denied access to the land and to the far-distant sacred place where it should pass after death back into the land: his age-old indestructible kuruna-spirit forever denied its return to alchera, to the dreamtimes, to sojourn in the abode of the spirits of all life from whence it would be reborn into life, to rest after his life's long wearying journeying, to sink with all division and hungering and warring and defeat forgotten, with all purpose accomplished, into the place of slow timeless sustainment, the haven reached, the pure peace granted of its ancestral home—doomed, now, to wander forever homeless and parted lost over the island, over the rocks and the cliffs, over the foam of the breakers, over the desolate sea.)

## III

THE cold woke her. It lay over the plain, gripping the land as a gale blew across from the sea, hanging over the electric-lit train that rattled and hissed and threaded its way through the night, penetrating the carriage-windows into the compartment, through the blanket wrapped round her and her coat and under the muffler at her neck and under her clothes, shivering into her bones, starting the marrow. She felt a dread, a heaviness, pressed down and clutched over her heart and a hot pain in her head and her tongue sticky and tasting in her mouth; her eyes seemed sunk in her skull and her eyelids, too, pressed heavily down. She struggled to

wake, pulled the blanket about her, tucked up her legs, opened her eyes and looked across at her friend.

She saw the other girl still asleep, with head fallen back and one hand hung limply over the arm-rest of the seat; with her mouth gaping open, her normally plump cheeks drawn in, pale and blue with the cold, and dark rings showing under her eyes.

She stood up and switched off the light; then huddled back in her seat, staring at the grey smoke that swirled up through the darkness, peered momentarily like a face at the window, and fled away, disappeared . . . .

(The sky sparkled blue and hot when they came out for the last time from the hospital at Adelaide; when they laughed and waved goodbye to the sister and nurses and wheel chair patients who farewelled them from the rail of the upstairs verandah: dazzled them as they turned away and went down the street—their luggage already sent on—, walking together in to the Railway Station, through the green neat lawns, past bright shrubs and the high bare-faced imitation-Gothic cathedral and the pillared Cross of Sacrifice and again through lawns and under spring-vivid English trees—willow, elm and oak—and occasional splendid gums, until they came to the river Torrens and crossed the cream-stuccoed bridge and went down to the water.

A silver light lay on the surface of the water. The tall rushes on the sloping green banks barely moved in the breeze as white gulls dipped through the sky. On the river the black swans floated slowly, to and fro, drifting magically between the water and the sky, the vital rhythm of their swimming and feeding and sleeping and mating, of their sonorous honking, their upraising at dusk and beating with huge black passionate wings on the dusk and of their dying uninterrupted by the coming and going of men, women, children and dogs or the traffic nearby.

Her friend took some crumpled paper from her pocket and threw it towards three approaching swans. Their red eyes glittered as they swam suddenly faster and the water pushed up and slid away in small waves from their rounded black breasts. Cheated, their long necks curved again up from the water. They turned aimlessly away, but the girl held out her hand and the dark under-water webbed feet of one swan thrust quickly. He swirled towards her, the feathers in his neck quivered, the long black neck uncurved, straightened and shot as if unsheathed and the red clacking beak opened and she jerked her hand back as the hard

red horn shut on her finger and she cried out aloud and the people walking on the bridge turned quickly to stare.

On the train—after they had wound up into the gorge and hills that cut off the grey shining vista of the city and the yellow aerodrome and the sea; after they had passed the spring garden of green vineyards at Nuriootpa and the darker farmlands to the north—, at Peterborough, they returned to their compartment to find an old man slumped in the corner of the seat.

He looked up at them defiantly when they re-entered. Then, as he saw they were staying, he turned half-confusedly, half-shyly, to the window and gazed at the brown and purple peaks of the Flinders ranges.

'Gawd,' he said, 'Gawd, I'll be glad when I'm on th' other side iv THEM.' He peered round at them out of his stained whiskers.

She looked at his bronzy-dark lean face, its burnt skin wrinkled but showing the bone hard underneath; at his shining red nose and the scarred wart on the end of his nose; and at his eyes gleaming palely up at her now, faded yellowish-blue, sun-bleached.

'Yiz needn't be afraid iv ME', he said suddenly as they eyed him. 'Iz too old fer that sort iv THING. Be-sides, Iz done without it that long Iz got nearly to ferget 'ow. None iv that out THERE.'

He offered them some beer, and they said no, and he said no, too, and 'Civileh-SHUN', and threw the full bottle suddenly out the window.

'Iz was goin' to Ad-DEE,' he said, pointing back to where Peterborough had disappeared in the hills, 'en Iz only gets THERE, en Iz spends a week THERE, en there aint no breath iv hair in the whole er-area. So every night Iz gets up, en goes fer a walk roun' the place fer some HAIR. En the first night Iz meets a pro-zie; en the next night Iz meets a milk-man; en the next night Iz meets the night-cart—P-PHEW—; en Iz gives over.' He laughed raucously and his eyebrows twitched and a dribble ran from his mouth.

They were coming near the Flinders now and could see the harsh waterless ranges standing jagged and naked in the sun.

'GOATS', he said. 'Goats eaten everythin' off iv 'em en made a des-sert. En cattle. Have yiz been on th'other side iv the Fleen-ders, lai-dies? The salt-bush wiz growin' on them 'ills when Iz was a boy all the way to the Cen-ter; en now its GORN. En the cattle Iz seen standin' in a drought, beasts that yiz wouldn't think was flesh en blood, just standin', a piece iv old wrinkle' hide hung over some bones, with red win-ders fer eyes. Yiz could've gone up to 'em en given 'em a push—en plop—they'd've just fallen over

en lain there with their legs cocked up at yiz feet. On the gib-bers. Have yiz seen the gib-BERS? What's left iv the flat-tops, where the sun has burned the salts into porce-lin. Some are as big as two hands en some are the size iv pennies. Gibbers are round en flat en yeller or red. En the wind blasts them smooth as a babies behind. Just red en white salt far as yiz can see, en dead salt-bush, en the sun. Just the sun. En ARNTS. Have yiz seen the arnts, lai-dies? Ar-mies iv arnts? Iz've sat all day long watchin' 'em fight. At sun-up two lots come out iv their 'ills, with scouts in front, en battal-yins, en gen-rals, en sar-gints, en platoons en what-not. En the scouts meets each other, en all iv a sudden-like one lot puts 'em up a blue strip on their be-hinds, en th'other lot puts 'em up a red strip, en like yiz blown a whistle theyz sets to en fights like Turkey de-mons. All day long theyz go it, grabbin' each other with their pinchers, en tearin' off iv 'em legs, en puttin' out eyes. Then just along sun-down theyz stops like that whistle's blown a-gain. En the red ones sorts themselves out, en carry 'ome their injured, en the blue ones does the same, en theyz all marches 'ome. Iz went to the first war, en the 'ome folks en the genrals says we was fightin' fer free-dim. S' Iz goes en Iz fights fer free-DIM. FREE-DIM. En the next time comes, en theyz says the same thing again, en Iz don't mind to go a-gain; but Iz knows it aint fer what theyz says its fer. Its fer ARNTS.'

'Blas-tid li-ARS', he said. 'That's 'Stra-LEE, en theyz blowin' all her gib-bers en sand-'ills to bits with them blas-tid bombs. En one day sure theyz'll find theyz've got no blastid gib-bers left. None LEFT.'

He spat out the window, his yellow-stained saliva catching on the sill, shaking and glinting in the sunlight, running down on the inside of the window-sill into the compartment.

'En no blastid fools like me to go en live in 'em. En no ab-boes, neither. What's more honester than yiz or ME. What gives yiz their last drop iv water, en cuts their arm open en gives yiz a drink. If theyz likes yiz. But there won't be none LEFT. Just bleedin' trip-pers, trip-pin' about over 'em bombs. No pro-zies THEN. No milk-MEN. No night-CARTS. No GOATS. No GIB-BERS. No ARNTS.'

He stood up, still gazing out the window to the north, swaying as the train jolted. He hitched his trousers, and they saw his hard, knotted, sun-darkened hands. The fires had died in his eyes as he turned to them half-dreamily, half-wistfully.

'It's good to have someone sensible to talk with,' he said, look-

ing at them fixedly for a moment then jerking upright. 'Ex-cuse me, lai-dies. Iz just must go en have a leak.'

They changed their compartment. Later, at Quorn, they saw his wizened white-haired figure, clutching a swag stained with red dust over his shoulder, stepping gingerly from the carriage-door down to the platform and hobbling quickly away. The engine shrieked. A cloud of white steam swirled at the window, blocked their view and smothered the old man.

At Port Augusta they left the shining strip of the Gulf again behind and pushed into the brown and yellow-brown and grey stretching salt-bush country, where well-fed cattle grazed close to the railway line; where the horizons turned flat and yellow-purple inland.

The land grew more arid and more copper-coloured, and hotter, until they came into sight of the suddenly brilliant blue water of Lake Hart, beached with snow-white salt, which blazed in the sun and flashed in their eyes with a fierce splendour and unearthliness in that desert place unique for them: so that they turned away and looked at each other and drew the blinds over the open windows and lay down on the seats of the compartment trying to sleep.

They fed in the dining-car on soup and lamb chops with vegetables, and peaches and refrigerated ice-cream, and hot sweet coffee.

In the evening they passed through several valleys where samphire grasses and dark green kardia shone, as the sun set splashing colour and light on to the higher slopes.

The next morning a lake of white mist lay over the land, uncovering, as the sun again came gleaming, fewer more straggly, more stunted gums than those they had seen earlier and a now red dry earth.

The guard entered. His dark uniform was soiled and creased, and the sleep still showed in his eyes.

'We'll be seein' lots of blacks, ladies,' he said. 'I have to tell you it's best not to buy their boomerangs. Dirty. Filthy things. Flies all over 'em. Disease and that sort of thing. A scurvy lot. Good for nothin'. How are you likin' the trip? It'll be hot today in the Nullabor.' He grinned down at them.

The heat came quickly. When the guard had gone she stood by the open window. A hot dry wind blew over her without cooling. The earth grew redder: endlessly flat and red. Under the scattered clumps of small trees they saw blacks squatting near their makeshift wurleys.

They both stretched out again on the seats half-exhausted as the sweat trickled from their foreheads, at their necks and armpits, soaking their underclothes.

She woke again to a grinding of brakes and the seat's jerking as the train slowly stopped. The sun beat on to the roof of the carriage, making a furnace. She looked over the dreary hot plain: essentially devoid of habitation or living things except for the few pitiful blacks who managed somehow to cling to a frail thread of life there. Two iron railway huts stood near the line.

Dozens of blacks came running from different directions towards the train, clamouring near the dining-car, holding out tins and crying for food and waving their boomerangs at the passengers. She stared at the cloud of flies that followed hanging over them, at the rags of cast-off European clothes tied round their gaunt bodies, and at the children, covered with flies and sores, horribly emaciated. Suddenly, silently, holding a tin in front of her, a woman appeared standing motionless outside the window looking at them, carrying a pot-bellied child tied with sacking straddled on her hip, her body shrinking from them inside its torn cotton smock that barely hid the shape of her breasts; her arms covered with scars; and her black pupil-wide eyes glowering from their overhanging brows, glowering from a face of incredible ugliness that was scarred, too, and pocked with old sores.

Behind her stood a boy, also holding a tin, his free arm hanging limp, dressed in torn cotton trousers, apparently unaware of the flies crawling even on his head, with one bare foot lifted from the red dirt resting on the blistering-hot railway-line iron, glaring at her, watching her, waiting for her to move.

A hot clammy silence hung over her, over the compartment and the group of beggarly blacks.

The boy's blazing black fathomless eyes bored into her eyes until the blood rushed to her face, and a shuddering sick pain thumped in her heart. The heat dancing from the horizon flooded into the compartment, the train again shrieked like a pain-maddened violated animal, her friend took her camera while she threw some sweets and fruit from the window, and the foetid stench of the blacks flung back through the window, breaking over her nostrils and mouth, suffocating her, as the train jumped forward, several times, then slid away. The sun burned terribly down.)

## IV

THE world was all windless, quiet. Looking up the sun caught in his eyes but he looked higher, into blue space, which shone far-away as the dreamtimes, pale as the morning, clear as the spring, glowing and new and penetrable forever for all spirits; binding, roofing and protecting forever with spirits and immensity the red world.

The sun had warmed and relaxed his limbs, and warmed the earth underneath him. With his arms and legs stretched on the earth, desire came tensing in his young body. He saw the fresh stick pushed into the fire and saw that she, mia, his mother had gone, was missing, and he jumped up with fear and then rage knotting in him, staring over the curve of the hills, across the plain, and scanning the ground. Then he saw Erritja, the great eagle-hawk, perched on the mallee tree, and her tracks on the ground, and he sat slowly, unworried again, looking at Erritja, whose feathered legs clutched on a branch of the tree; whose brown black-tipped beak curved cruelly from the sky; whose far-seeing eyes darted yellow and mobile searching the plain: who was blood-related knanja-brother to himself, Nabbari, and whose audacity and strength had been transferred to him by Munnerin's rubbing of eagle-hawk leg-bones on his legs and arms: who in the far-distant alchera had first brought water to Oolburra—the limestone rock protruding high from the sandhill's crest—when Weeloo, his stone-curlew wife—left behind gathering roots, fruit, ants and lizards while he hunted for meat—had been stolen from him by the rapacious crow; when Erritja had lit a fire on the rock and made his spear hard and sharp in the flames and left the imprint of the fire and the spear and his crouching knees on the rock, and whirled far up into the sky, gathered all the black rain clouds out of the west, and brought them thundering like ruka-ruba pouring their waters over the rock; when from behind the clouds like lightning he had speared the crow and fallen on Weeloo, beating her with the flat of his spear so that she cried aloud, so that on quiet nights she still flutters above the ground crying piteously in her sorrow and shame.

He pushed the stick a little into the fire and stood up. After walking aside and squatting down to urinate and defecate and covering the place with sand he began following the tracks of his mother.

He came down to where she was squatting in a small hollow with the child at her breast. She stood up. 'Ingwendama inwulla;

alchera gnoilya ta eruka,' she said. Last night, in her sleep, in her dream, she had seen the wild dog: the great evil dog of the dream-times.

He looked up at her face and saw the depression at the root of her nose, the receding forehead and matted hair and, under the eye-brow ridges, the foreboding in her sunken eyes; saw the scars of mourning on her cheeks and on her breasts and body, thick raised weals of keloid tissue where eagle-hawk down and powdered ashes had been rubbed into self-inflicted gashes in the flesh; and saw, too, lower down, causing a recrudescence of his early-morning anger, making him ashamed of his presence near her, the dark stains of unclean menstrual blood dried near the lacerated sub-incised vulva, where a maamu demon covered with hair had gone in and scratched and torn on the vagina with his curved piri nails to make her bleed. He stamped on the ground and spat and shouted and stooping picked up sand which he threw in her eyes so that she turned away shaking too and he cried out aghast at this violation of his approaching unattainable manhood, at the conditions of their lives that reduced them, forced them to infringe sacred tabus and inevitably, helplessly incur Numbakulla's wrath and hatred and that of their ever-present ancestors and of all watching spirits. He went away from her struggling with the impulses nurtured in him demanding the kill; impulses aggravated by his knowledge that in the tribal days in the hands of grown men they would have been fiercely, swiftly fulfilled.

He went away and sat down while the blood beat in his temples, and looked at the sharp, contorted outlines of Oolburra; which reminded him of the nearby old man rock, who in the alchera had stolen two boys, drowning them in the sea . . . .

(At the Pitchenturra camp Munnerin would not allow him to go with the other growing boys among the young women.

All day Munnerin sat under the nala tree of his knanja, while the men hunted and the women gathered insects and fruits and ground the nardoo; while he hunted or played at hunting and played with the other boys.

After dark Munnerin stayed on alone. The children whispered about him, the men and women looked every now and then across at him from their fires as they sat singing, but no one interrupted him; no one spoke to or went near him. Nabbari knew that the old man was sitting down with his thoughts so that he could see into the hidden world to which children and women and most men were denied access; gathering himself—his thoughts and

dreams and the knowledge gained sleeping and waking—concentrated so that in his dreams he would see into the hearts and minds of even distant men and spirits, would have speech with them and listen to their talking.

When the singing stopped and the men and women went to their mia-mia or curled round the fires to sleep, Nabbari lay on his back looking up at the stars burning fierily over his head. He saw Munnerin lie out stiffly, strangely, on the ground; then turned over and stared into the gloom, where the mantled desert stretched on and on to the stars; where the spirit of Munnerin even now was travelling.

At daylight Munnerin's bending over his face woke him. He looked up at the black eager fathomless eyes, the white beard, shrunk cheeks and wizened arms and trunk and he rose silently and went, following the Raitchawa from the camp.

They left the camp and the Pindini water—where generations of wanderers had destroyed the big trees, but where thick shrubs and grasses grew near the rocks—, skirted the rocks and followed a track through spinifex and mallee to the first bare sandhill, climbing a hundred paces to its summit and gazing down the next long scrub-filled hollow to a clump of straight-trunked burrawong trees.

Munnerin stopped and they both sat; he, the boy, imitating now the characteristic squatting attitude of the Raitchawa. They looked back at the smoke from the camp-fires where the Pitchenturra and Lungkartikukana and Maiyarra were preparing for their day's food gathering; and turned looking northwards at the main range of the mountains which they had not long before crossed—which they had entered through a rocky defile leading into a broad hidden valley that in its turn opened on to a plain carpeted with green herbs and tall grasses shaking in the wind as they passed; where blue hills fell away with soft-curving slopes in the distance; where the sun seemed softer and cooler and a cool wind always blew; where ferns grew and birds clustered round clear, sparkling sheltered rock pools; and where, at the southern rampart headlands. an endless line of jagged and round granite peaks and grassed ridges stood over the plain—, and which lifted its pale-blue outlines now far off at the horizon. Munnerin sat motionless, brooding, his hands grasped on his knees, sunlight glinting on his eagle-beaked nose, one side of his face lit by the sun and the other cast into shadow, his bleached eyebrows and beard burnished silver and glistening and his old maned head lifted peering with such intent across the orange-red desert that Nabbari felt the

Raitchawa had gone again out from himself, was wandering again back over the way they had come, over the gullies and rock-holes and ridges, watching at the secret sacred places of their home country: so that he turned and, looking at the mounting incandescent fierce orb of Tchintu, saw far up in the blue-purple air an eagle-hawk circling.

Munnerin touched and looked at him suddenly then and held his thin boy's neck with thin old mulga-hard knotted fingers, and stared searching into his boy's eyes with his eyes: until Nabbari saw those eyes turn incandescent not with light and a red flame like Tchintu but with darkness, with black fires blazing steadily and unextinguishable out of the vast deep being of the old Raitchawa, out of the vast deep history of pain and sacrifice and wisdom achieved in the making of his race: and the small heart and soul of the boy with its indestructible kuruna-spirit residue fashioned in the dreamtimes was uncovered, revealed, scrutinized in all its potentialities and potential secret workings and the Raitchawa released him, grunting the Irr Irr Irr of his approval, standing and pointing the way on.

Munnerin faced the west: his white-hair-matted chest facing the gold-clear sunlit west. And Nabbari felt a hot breath touch on his eyes and felt something of the old man's knowledge binding and entering him, smothering his fear.

Across that intricate waste ocean of sand-ridges the ancestor rock tors rose like islands, pointing a navigation to the Pitchenturra and to all wandering people who would learn their language: Koonamutta, clothed, spinifexed, to his summit; Ingga, his naked red flanks exposed like raw wounds; Ungarra, with worn granite features contorted on the skyline; Mukiri and Kulpi both gleaming, both prone as if asleep but ready at the first sound of an intrusion to rise in anger and club to death any reckless, trespassing stranger. And southwards the red sand ruled, past the purple horizon, all the way to the red-earth plain.

They went on, Munnerin's spindly legs moving untiringly through the sand and grasses, Nabbari determined behind him not to lag, determined to master the weakness of his boyhood as the sun burned on the back of his head, and sweat ran freely in the small of his back and into his eyes, and his breath caught as if burning inside him. He saw the bare ant roads reticulated for miles in the loam flats; and saw, for the first time, the most vivid of all animals, the brilliant-coloured southern ant-eater, whose orange and scarlet snow-white-striped shining coat flashed from afar in that red and brown wilderness; whose breath came scuff-

ling when he caught the small creature and felt the warm blood flowing and beating at its silky chest: the white and scarlet dazzle of whose coat held him dazed and intrigued until Munnerin appeared far ahead and he had to run to overtake the Raitchawa, who still moved effortlessly, grimly on.

They caught a nyntucka goanna, three paces long, with transverse yellow spots marking his black skin. Holding hard to his twisting head and thumping long tail, throwing him on his back, they explored his soft belly with their fingers for the long fillets of white-flecked fat extended on both sides; finding them undeveloped, not worth carrying on their return to the camp: the nyntucka was too thin. So they left him to thresh again on to his legs and crash away unharmed.

They approached Kulpi's frowning battlements. Nabbari kept close to Munnerin as they came through the scrub to an open rocky space, where a worn track led between boulders up on to the very slopes of Kulpi himself. Munnerin dropped to his hands and knees and he followed suit, crawling behind the Raitchawa up the track through a gorge overhung with high granite cliffs.

Coming to the rock water-hole they frightened Miril-yiril-yiri, the small darting brilliant-blue-backed, blue-breasted wren who was searching with Mining-mining his wife for white ants. Nabbari looked longingly at the clear silent pool of water, but Munnerin did not turn aside or stop. Jindirr-jindirr, the black and white wagtail, flew up startled from her nest; and Nabbari blew gently on the grass- and spider-web-woven nest as he crawled past.

They came to a different hill scarred with age-old excavations, passing the remains of countless small fires, crawling up and down over rocks of greasy red ochre until they reached the red cavernous hole where the Pitchenturra had dug for hundreds of years. Munnerin took a sharp flint from his wallet and cut at the ochre and held him, Nabbari, rubbing the red ochre carefully all over his still breathless body: so that he knew he was to be initiated out here, alone, instead of as in their home-country with other boys and young men in full tribal ceremonies conducted by the elders of the whole tribe.

The Raitchawa crawled away and sat decorating himself, elaborately, exactly, not only with red ochre but using also white ochre and charcoal from his wallet.

Returning, he took Nabbari back to the water-hole, still not allowing him to drink, unwrapping the kangaroo-hide bundle and taking and handing him a piece of flesh: the first child's flesh he had ever been given, had ever eaten; which after the first strange

mouthful he found sweet on his tongue. Munnerin then cut with the flint the large vein of his own arm, holding the arm to Nabbari who put his mouth quickly over the spurting hot rich stinging salt blood, drinking eagerly. Before tying a string to his arm Munnerin rubbed blood with the ochre on the parts of Nabbari's body and took a fire-stick, as daylight faded, and lit a fire; crooning meanwhile ancient songs of how Numbakulla first came in the alchera with his spirit fire-stick to bleed the young men, marking them with his sign: the visible sign of their manhood. He gave Nabbari a fire-stick, warning him on pain of death to hold henceforth to his own fire: not to tamper now with any other than his own woman. Nabbari took the fire-stick, feeling it pressed on his body and feeling it hard in his hand; shivered at the Raitchawa's injunctions; watched his glaring old eyes; and watched him rise again from the fire and silently withdraw, disappear into the gathering night, leaving him alone in the night.

He looked at the single red and yellow flame licking from the mulga wood, at the broken circle of light ringed with shadow flickering over the rocks, and up to the stars: shut out by the gleam of firelight or by the overhanging black cliffs they could bring no reassurance, hidden from him. He held the fire-stick closer in his hand and the smoke caught for a moment, acrid, choking in his nostrils and throat and hurting his eyes and he ran from the fire and threw himself on the ground, hearing a sudden flutter of wings, cupping his hands round the gossamer-frail still-warm nest, touching his lips to the nest, and convulsively burying his mouth in the warmth where the bird's breast a moment before in the darkness had rested.

The sound froze his body as he stretched on the rocks: lifting slowly from afar off its plaintive wail, growing louder and sweeping nearer and sending hot and cold spasms of fear shuddering in his stomach, at his heart, raising the thick hair pricking on his scalp and rushing with one long accumulating roar of noise into the rocks overhead, reverberating, ringing, beating him cowed and defenceless on the bare ground with no hope of escape; and rising to its awful crescendo commanding the night and the sky and the rocks and the ground underneath him. Twanyirrika spoke in the night. Then the strong arms came round his body and lifted him and carried him swiftly upwards over the rocks through the gloom to the bare rock shelf surrounded by stars where he was laid on his back, where a small fire burned, where the flint gleaming in the starlight came severing on his drawn tautened foreskin and his blood emptied on to the fire and steam from the urine-dampened

red-hot ashes eased on the wound; and where the long thin bull-roarer of Twanyirrika himself was touched to the wound and the lartna was accomplished and he, Nabbari, was ready now for the last ceremony—which he had still not undergone and which he would never now undergo—to take him to manhood; when held fast on his back upon the table of old men the flint would come again in the dark time before dawn and lay open the penile portion of his urethra, flushing the evil spirits from him in the trickling blood as each Beera, every moon, they are flushed from all women; when returning healed and strengthened from his sojourn with Twanyirrika, carrying his new shield and nulla-nulla and decorated with the markings of his new tribal station, he would step into the space left by the old men to easily, proudly hurl the straight-edged nulla-nulla high up in the direction of the place where mia, his mother, had lived in the dreamtimes, proving before the assembled women that he was free now from the control of all women: that he was a man.)

Maiyarra approached. She carried the bundle of their clothes, which she had taken down from the mallee tree, and the tins.

He walked with her, across the sand, on to the red soil, towards Oolburra. He broke away from her suddenly and darted over the lizard tracks and caught the darting lizard with both hands, grasping it firmly on the ground then easing his fingers under its soft abdomen and under its forelegs, reaching to its throat where he choked it swiftly and lifted it into the air still squirming and displayed it to his mother, showed its jet-black chest and throat and brilliant vermilion-coloured upper surface marked with yellow and black.

Further on she took the lizard when he paused, stood rigid, pointed with his finger, and began moving soundlessly on the balls of his feet towards the fly-quick-quick lizard, who lay with light blue-grey back and darker reddish and yellow-brown lateral stripe glinting in the sun; who, wide awake, would flick over the sand faster than the eye could follow to leap on to his hind legs catching flies with his springing tongue; who stayed motionless as he slowly approached and tensed and leapt and who leapt too but too late into his waiting, clutching hand.

They went on to Oolburra, where he took his fire-stick, twirling it as Lungkartikukana and Munnerin and their ancestors had done, and lit a small fire with twigs on which his mother half-cooked the lizards while he played, laughing and romping, with the three year old child; where, later, near the shadow of the rock, the three

of them sat eating. When Maiyarra began to suckle the child he took one of the tins and walked on alone.

He came through the shadow of Oolburra to the brink of Erritja's great water-hole, standing staring at the grass-covered basin far below. Then, easily, quickly, he descended the rough limestone rocks, letting himself at one part of the cliff drop to the waiting ledge below but knowing—so that he could even have made the trip in the dark—the exact position of hand- and foot-holds for his ascent.

Walking down the track worn bare in the grass he looked up at the circle of distant sky and saw Maiyarra, her small dark body surrounded by the sun, signalling, waving to him. He signalled back and looked at the sunlit white cliffs and the high black shadowed cliffs before him, and at the hole yawning now at their base where he must enter the dark. Without flinching he lowered himself through the gap in the rocks until his feet found the slippery earth and he squatted, shivering in the sudden draught of cold dank air that blew on him, hearing the hoarse moaning whisper of Wonambi moving far below in the bowels of the plain, waiting for his eyes to grow accustomed after the glare of the day to this gloom . . . .

(He had seen, he could see, nothing. Cold and dry, touching him, the hand caught his wrist and he felt again the old man's breath on his face and again he rose, from this their last camp with Munnerin, following the Raitchawa; who crept slowly now through the still dark midnight; who led on to the brink of the water-hole where he lit his fire; who unwrapped from its package of emu feathers and human hair his Raitchawa's magic bamburu, Munnerin's bamburu, of fine light-yellow mallee wood, old and weathered but intricately, exquisitely, etched with the symbols of the nala-tree knanja and with the diamond and crescentic patterns of his spirit markings, with the dark female figure of potency in its centre-piece; and who—after they had placed their hands on each other's breast, and underneath the hair near the bone he had felt with his fingers the slow heart thumping—pushed the bamburu between their two bodies, with his free hand gathering slowly the deep-seated Raitchawa magic from his withering bowels and stomach and his heart, and drew it carefully, firmly, along the bamburu, holding the other hand clenched to catch the magic and impregnate it, enclose it, give it shelter and a new place of sustenance in his trembling, wondering, fearful, receptive boy's heart.)

He moved, now, feeling his way down the defile in the darkness towards Wonambi and the water.

He came to the silent, fathomless unseen water and crouched, filling the tins, feeling the water cold as death on his hands and feet and in his gullet as he drank, peering up through the gloom to the pale, blind, growing, incredible star-like creature overhead, his teeth chattering, his ears strained to the lapping rumbling noise sounding afar off immensely in the darkness; and turned and stole swiftly back clutching the life of his parts.

He emerged into the dazzling light, mindlessly climbed the path and the cliffs and walked down to Maiyarra—who sat singing, smiling, greeting him—, and the child and gave them water and watched them drink and gazed over the plain.

They went then across the plain, through the small dense hard hairy-leaved clumps of blue-bush to the nala, the edible-bark tree, where they dressed up in the cumbersome smelling clothes and sat and looked at the tin sheds and silver line that disappeared into the heat shimmer on both sides of the horizon.

He sat in the trunk's shadow, rested his hand on the gleaming bark, and felt the old, wizened, weathered bark furrowed and hard under his hand, protecting its hidden sap from the sun and the wind. And he felt, still watching and brooding from the branch over his head, the hidden kuruna spirit of Munnerin; whose hard thin withered body Maiyarra and he had buried in the deep grave under fresh green branches, where he had sat wailing all night long; whose spirit had not returned to its abode in the secret places of their home country but had passed here, brooding and watching, unappeased at the old man's death, into this tree.

The hard-leafed branch of the nala quivered: as it had quivered on the cloudless hot day after Munnerin's burial when Nabbari sat there alone; when because of the death of the Raitchawa of the nala-tree totem a shower of water had welled, sprayed and fallen out of the dry brown leaves soaking into the moistureless ground at his feet.

They started up, hearing from afar off the sound of the waijela's awful Wonambi-train approaching. They walked quickly to the line.

He felt the earth shaking and saw the steel rails quiver and he saw, then, straining his eyes, the dark rising speck of the locomotive, which grew larger as its noise grew louder, which detached itself from the plain and came rushing towards them and shrieked and poured its evil black smoke into the sky as he held the tin tight in his hand and planted his feet firmly and the people ran

forward and the monster loomed up hissing, roaring, squealing, spouting steam and smoke and shuddering and champing to a standstill alongside them.

Behind Maiyarra he moved forward. One foot lifted on to the hot rail. Through the gap into the compartment he saw two pale-faced, pale-haired waijela women. The tin hung at his side.

The strained bloodless face of one woman came closer, peering out at them. He saw her pale eyes, pale blue as the early-morning sky before sunrise, and stared in amazement at the pallor that had dispossessed him; and the flame rose in him like the red sun rising and the woman shivered and his eyes blazed and his male scorn of her raged in him and the miwi of his blood, of his young seed, that in the old times would have hurled spear, nulla-nulla, club or just himself at her was caught strangled, impotent, outraged, castrated at that spot and moment in time as the train once more shrieked and lurched forward and some fruit and sweets fell from the window and he yelled the drowned jangga meenya bomunggur, jangga meenya bomunggur again and again which Lungkartikukana had shouted and Munnerin had muttered and which the black whirling steel wheels of the waijela's train on the underneath steel now chanted and thundered: jangga meenya bomunggur, jangga meenya bomunggur, jangga meenya bomunggur: until they had withdrawn and the train had diminishing receded: the smell of the white man is killing us: until the monster disappeared from sight and sound leaving its stench still clinging round him and a pillar of black smoke hung up in the sky. The nala tree shook and the shadow of Erritja passed over the ground.

LOUIS JOHNSON

# *In Memoriam: Thomas Wolfe*

TOM WOLFE had found it to his bitter cost,
Traversing footsteps backward to his past,
Walking a boyhood's streets among known eyes
Turned cold upon him suddenly—the spies
Of his blood, they said, would sell their secrets
Best kept in dark: let there be no regrets:
*You can't go home again, you can't go home.*

Ah, prodigal of the world; you have not kept
Trace of your laughter or the tears you've wept,
Stored neither love nor money for
The rainy day upon the alien shore.
You've bitched the wicket, botched the heritage,
Curdled the comfort that would ease your age.
*You can't go home again, you can't go home.*

Wet streets and wide and cold at night
You'd chosen rather than the quiet firelight,
Warming your fingers on a frozen lust
Against you in some furtive doorway thrust.
There'll be no morning kiss, no rousing shout
To break your dawn or drive the spiders out.
*You can't go home again, you can't go home.*

Rough wanderer in the desert of the world,
Who shall attend you? Neither love nor child
Carry your burden: at the end
Only the rats, the beetles, stand for friend
By the broken wall. The unchecked grass that sprouts
From the path you could have tended shouts
*Never come home again, you can't come home.*

JAMES BERTRAM

# *Poems for Horses*

## *1. Abdul*

(for H.K.)

YEATS, with his eye for a horse
Or an elegant woman,
Might have written a poem as proud
As your heart, on that day

When, over the pony course,
In an air unclouded with omen,
The soaring quarters of Abdul
Blotted the crowd, and their cry.

## *2. Cinderella*

'Angry horse!' said the hard Hungarian trainer,
Snorting less crisply than the grey.
Perhaps he was right, as she passaged out of the bird-cage
Into a slow piaffer.

But O, once away, and out and over the barriers,
Dark tail streaming free,
Curving like mountain water on rounded boulders,
Then nonchalantly

Changing course in mid-air: till against the stop-watch
She streaked for home—
No lovelier mare than this came out of Arabia,
Marked by the Prophet's thumb.

## *3. Ming*

(for J.)

Clear and bright as the dynasty you were named for,
With a white diamond set in your wide brow,

Your movement was poetry pure as your breeding:
'By Iliad, out of a Hunting Song mare.'

Over the hurdles you raced and won for your owners
Too long ago, and under another name.
They were greedy and would not give up. You were
strained when we bought you,
But that mild eye

Looked out on distance and knew no defeat; that
arching
Neck was a conqueror's always; that poised head,
Clean-cut, faultless, spoke of
Death to the deathless poet who rode you once.

Of course you had temperament, like all poets and
Iliads.
The race-track was in your blood. It took three long
seasons,
The devotion of Ruth and the patience of Rachel,
before you
At last, in the show ring,

Conquered a judge, and made him feel a maestro.
For, when he rode you carefully in a straight line,
You responding
Changed your legs at every stride of the canter.

This was the moment we will always remember:
Not that fatal
Final show-day, when bearing a light-weight rider
You fell, broke your heart, and hers.

### *4. Kodiak*

No one could ever remember your name,
Thinking always of cameras;
But still in one small island off fogbound Alaska
There are red bears almost as large and handsome as
you.

### *5. Holly*

He strove with none, for none was worth his strife.
Carrots he loved, and apples coarsely chewed;
The punctual bucket measured out his life
In mild monastic stable solitude.

Only in company his blood awoke:
He flexed his graceful crest, and cried in pain
As Xanthos once to doomed Achilles spoke,
Pacing by Balios of immortal strain.

### *6. Maria*

*There is a queen in China . . . W. B. Yeats*

There is a horse in Styria, a true-bred Lipizzan,
And show days or holidays, such praises fly around
Of his unblemished lineaments, a whiteness with no stain,
That he might be that Pegasus who scorned to tread the ground.
And there's a score of thoroughbreds as royal as their line,
Like Aureole by Hyperion. whose fame is noised afar:
Their nostrils are Arabian, their pasterns raked and fine,
But I would choose, before them all, a solid skewbald mare.

The punters still in fancy clock Mainbrace's winning stride,
And Beau le Havre had better points although he had poor luck;
Since Dalray went the Ruthless stock has everywhere been cried,
And there's a Foxbridge colt I saw once in the common ruck
Of yearlings at the auction, whose action was a dream—
He moved across the paddock like a seagull through the air:

He may win fifty thousand pounds, or not be worth
a damn;
So I'll take my Maria, that solid skewbald mare.

There's Foxhunter and Starlight, there's Tosca and
Prince Hal,
The hunters and the jumpers, in the rough or in the
raw;
There's Pilgrim or Tramella for the cream of *haute*
*école*,
And Count Dorsaz, the cockiest little horse I ever
saw.
High-stepping harness ponies still remember ancient
blood,
They may spread out what sail they please for all I
know or care:
If I have thirty miles to go by nightfall on the road,
I'll choose one like Maria, my solid skewbald mare.

There'll be that crowd, that barbarous crowd, through
all the centuries,
And who can tell but some young colt will gallop
all men wild
Who is the moment's nonpareil (though that my
heart denies)
And soar to dizzier triumphs yet on track or jumping
field?
The crowd will cheer the winning horse, they cheer
their dividend,
And horsemen too may have their fads, some foal
beyond compare:
Myself I choose a journey horse who steps out to
the end—
So let them keep their paragons, I'll keep my skew-
bald mare.

JAMES K. BAXTER

# *The Clown's Coat*

October; and the whitening peartree heaves
Its ignorant beauty at my open door.
Shall this dry branch of knowledge put on leaves
Or soul conceive the summer she was born for?
It may be so; the strong Redeemer's breath
Blows hard upon the ashes of my death.

Man-Maker, on the anvil of the years,
Lord Light, forging my heart, a sinewy blade
From black and obdurate iron—Thou knowest my fears;
*Ad te clamavi,* flesh by Thee made,
From the dark prison house. Enter, illuminate;
Blaze in my tomb; batter the narrow gate.

No; gentler is His road; and the rash tongue
Crying on truth, tells folly to the night.
The swallow on His breast will feed her young,
And timorous children wake to dawn's light
Fearing no evil; for the proud man's tower
He has pulled down, and shorn the lion's power.

I to that cave and wooden manger bring
Not frankincense, but the clown's coat I wore
Ten years denying my day's King.
Lust of the goat, wolf's anger tore
These holes; and needling pride sewed patches on.
He will wear it at high noon.

Yet this, at best, is homespun art.
I did not praise my winter mistresses
With half-words and a chilly heart;
With fevers of the last distress
My song was warm, and loud
In Babylon to please the melting crowd.

There in the lion's might companionless
Half of my heart is married to the dead.
Sleepwalker, sad adulteress
Throng at midnight to my bed
Asking—'O what new face
Took you from us, leaving an empty place?'

On them and me the same Face shines.
Lazarus, who was poor, lies safe at home
Beyond the lion's might and starless tomb;
And, though the little foxes spoil the vine,
Clown and King, the world's night dumb,
To the same tavern come.

# COMMENTARIES

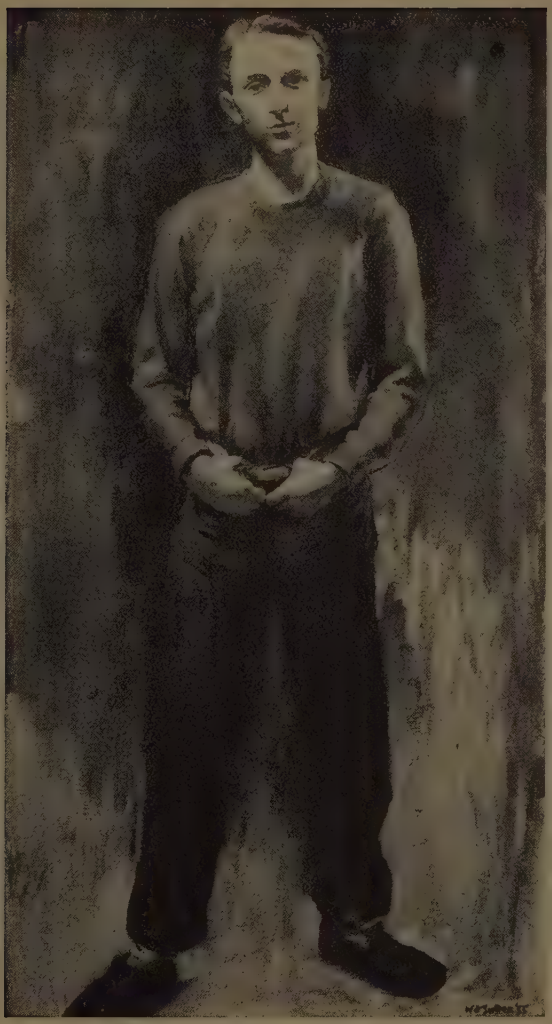
## ROY DANIELLS

## *Canadian Letter*

THE intellectual drive in this country—except where channelled into scientific research—is toward self-analysis. What has been said and written in the past year or so has but underlined the trend. A desire for self-understanding is an adolescent trait, and not the most winning trait of adolescence, either, but at present inescapable because the extreme pressure of international forces has made us feverishly anxious to find out what, if anything, we stand for before it is too late to stand for anything in a uniformly pressured continuum.

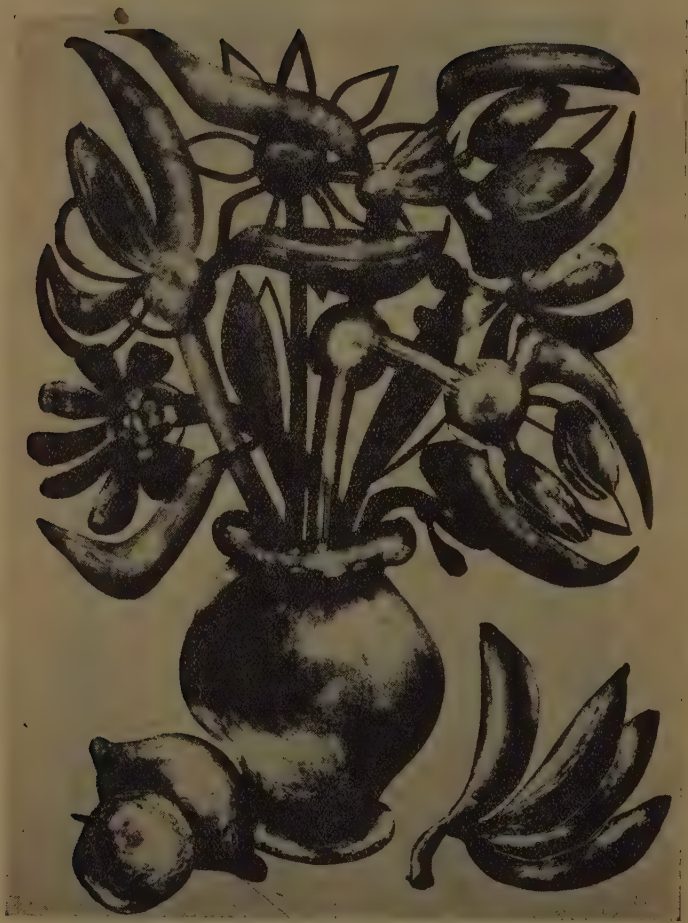
Donald Creighton, the historian, has given us the second volume of his biography of John A. Macdonald, *The Old Chieftain*. At present the Conservative party in this country is struggling to resume power, with some chance of success after nearly a quarter-century in the wilderness. It is appropriate that the life of its chief historical figure should just now be brilliantly reviewed and interpreted.

Review and interpretation is also the aim of Earle Birney's novel



44¾ in. x 23½ in.

W. A. SUTTON. Bill Culbert. *Oil, 1955.*



24½ in. x 18 ⅝in.

ROY COWAN. Black Flowers. *Lithograph, 1955.*

9¼ in. x 12¼ in.

LEO BENSEMANN. Carnations. *Pencil & Wash, 1952.*

14 in. x 10 in.

MAY SMITH. Mansion House, Kawau (Sir George Grey's House).
*Pen & Water Colour, 1949.*

*Down the Long Table*. By the device of a flash-back in the mind of an academic, the past is recaptured for examination. The professor is being grilled by a committee—in the general pattern of the McCarthy investigations—and his mind goes back to experiences on both sides of the border. The chief interest lies in a reconstruction of Marxist and particularly Trotskyite parties and propaganda in Canada of the thirties, of the Depression. The allegiances and entanglements of that time are refocussed, not only through the inquisitorial outlook of the committee but also by the revaluating conscience of the academic himself. The story, as a consequence, vibrates under extreme tension and with a multitude of overtones.

The poets have had a better year than usual, both in the number of books published and the number of individual poems one would not willingly let die. The current winner of the Governor-General's medal for poetry is Wilfred Watson, whose little collection *Friday's Child* is of interest in more ways than he could well have foreseen. Watson is a product of Vancouver Island and of that part of Vancouver Island which least resembles the rest of Canada. (I say this with conviction, having spent three years as a farm labourer in the same vicinity.) He is a highly temperamental person, writing sometimes like a follower of Eliot, sometimes like a disciple of Thomas, and when at his best like his unmistakable self and as dissimilar from the Canadian poetic norm as either of his masters. Since he does not explore either Canadian social problems, or Canadian landscape except incidentally, he has had no vogue. I have known Watson for a good many years but I have not heard of more than a half-dozen people who have shown any real interest in his work. It never achieved publication in this country beyond the stage of periodicals. Then it was sent to England and at once accepted for book publication. The award followed, but there is little response from readers on this side of the water. The outlook of the poems is personal and therefore in a sense international. The regional or national self-realization which the Canadian public demands Watson is not concerned to offer.

The most serious and enduring obstacle to a sense of cultural unity—apart from the fission between French and English-speaking communities—is as anyone would expect, geography. Canadian territory runs through nearly ninety degrees of longitude, which even at these high latitudes, is too great a distance to permit writers to know one another. True there are concatenations of writers on both east and west coasts and—very markedly—in the

cities along the upper St Lawrence and Lake Ontario. But it is quite possible to admire the work of an author from afar and never in twenty years find any opportunity of seeing or hearing him.

As a result, the Writers' Conference held last July at Kingston has assumed for all who were present an importance beyond its visible accomplishments. The Rockefeller Foundation gave a most generous grant to make the meetings possible and the irony of an American corporation financing a Canadian conference on Canadian writing is of so familiar a pattern as to cause no comment. Queen's University was a wise choice of locale. Kingston is a delightful town on the lakeshore, built of grey limestone and red brick on a pattern laid down by Scottish masons long ago. Contrasts of line and colour are afforded by its abundance of elm trees. Queen's has all the distinction of a small and proud university with a homogeneous tradition; the hospitality of the Queen's faculty made delegates from remote parts feel they had suddenly come home. This was all to the good and the avoidance for once of the big metropolitan universities as centres of convocation was fortunate. In the quiet of Kingston we sat down to examine ourselves. That we did not sit down to examine the nature of truth and beauty or the human soul, or even the nature of poetry and its inspiration was inevitable and right. One could be amazed at the pragmatic nature of the programme but, particularly in retrospect, one could not regret it. Once again the wheel came full circle and what made the conference difficult and desirable—the huge spread of the country—gave the subject matter—distribution and communication—a logical priority. If the Rockefeller Foundation had done no more than bring the delegates together for three days, its grant would have been well spent.

Poets and novelists (but not playwrights as such) were invited, along with critics and editors, librarians and publishers. There were good contingents from New Brunswick and British Columbia, a proof that the obstacle of distance had indeed been overcome. The bi-cultural problem proved harder to solve and there was no representation from French Canada.

Each topic was presented in a public meeting, then discussed in seminars, reports of which were brought to plenary sessions. In three days of such systematic overhauling of problems, each of us learned a great deal. So much so that in the plane carrying several of the Vancouver delegates home, plans were laid for a local British Columbian conference on much the same lines, which took place in late January. This depended for support on local bodies and on the hospitality of the University. For once the

hopes of the Rockefeller people that the ideas they promote will take root and flower in local soil was quickly fulfilled.

The intention of the Kingston conference was to trace, as it were, the course of a literary work from author through publisher and perhaps librarian (or through radio or TV) to reviewer or critic and so to an intelligent acceptance by its public. This concept proved a useful canal for the stream of discussion and carried us into a full review of the well-known difficulties and some hope of new solutions—chiefly by organized appeals to a reading public by all signs much larger and more receptive than twenty years ago.

Certain themes kept emerging. One was defined at the outset by the poet and editor-critic Arthur Smith, who was willing to accept the inconspicuous and unrecognized state of the Canadian poet as the price he must pay for accuracy and intensity of utterance. Smith was prepared to disregard public hostility and to write primarily (as chemists and mathematicians do) for the practitioners of his own craft. Most of us at the moment felt that his views were extreme and the novelists at Kingston, particularly, were eager for a larger and more reliable public. But the theme persisted and sprang up again during informal sessions where poets read their own work. In the Vancouver conference, too, Mrs Ethel Wilson, Roderick Haig-Brown and others insisted on the need of an inner life, a domain of ideas and forms to which the writer turns—all questions of market, media and masses apart. In Vancouver I was most of all moved by Alan Crawley, now living in retirement, who in spite of total blindness, for ten years edited the best poetry magazine in the country. He recalled the effect upon him, as a young man, of poems read by Harold Monro and his friends in London. It came as a delayed echo across the years.

The main business of both conferences went, of necessity, in another direction. At Kingston, Morley Callaghan, from his long and rich experience as a novelist, asked that society accept the writer as 'a unique wild goose'. This was not a bad image: our migrant geese, a wild-crying arrowhead in the remoteness of night skies, appeal to even the least imaginative (and have invaded our postage stamps as a national symbol). Callaghan, with some reason, wanted both freedom and recognition. Douglas Grant, the new editor of the *Toronto Quarterly*, followed with a paper on the critic—as mediator between author and public. The next day, John Gray, of Macmillans and Robert Allen, editor of *MacLean's Magazine*, carried discussion still further along the line of practicalities. Limited but increasing opportunities beckon the Canadian

author but he need not hope for sudden widespread recognition or for anything resembling fame or fortune. On the third day Robert Weaver of the C.B.C. and Hilton Smith of the Toronto Public Library revealed not only the difficulty of reaching the public (Hilton Smith's statistics for much of rural Canada were 'no books for no people') but also the existence of many limited 'publics' which the radio for example by special series can reach.

As at Kingston, the main voice of the Vancouver conference was heard in demands for greater support: from governments in the form of cash prizes for writers; from departments of education, that they print more Canadian literature in schoolbooks; from publishers, critics, radio, the public at large. Especially and insistently the demand arose in the Vancouver conference for a subsidized quarterly to comprise fiction, poems, criticism and reviews, with strong emphasis on Canadian material.

All very proper, very natural, very salutary. Even a conference of Christians is likely to spend more time on Church finance than with the love of God. But, as I said, there were some slight misgivings. Mrs Salversen—whose *Confessions of an Immigrant's Daughter* (1939) will always be a Canadian classic—was heard in Kingston to murmur in a gently amazed way that, when she and her friends started out, they wrote and their writing found its publisher. One was driven also to recall Rilke (Stephen Potter has laid down that it is O.K. to mention Rilke in 1955) and his advice to a correspondent—'Ask yourself in the stillest hour of your night: *must* I write?'

If the Kingston conference was not the best one could imagine, it was a great success and certainly the best one could hope to realize. On its own scale the same could be said of our Vancouver gathering. Earnestness, deep and abiding—as our grandfathers would have said—was everywhere apparent. Earnest purpose and now a great desire for organization. Frank Scott, of the McGill Law faculty, was chief organizer of the Kingston programme and gave the closing address. His long experience with writers and his own gamut of writing—from poetry to propaganda—have qualified him to speak with some authority and his services to authors entitle him to their respectful attention. He laid emphasis on the isolation which authors, especially poets, have always felt in this country and pointed to the fact that poetry written in Canada in the last fifty years has generally arisen from *groups*.

How dull and pragmatic all this is, but there is no use pretending otherwise. The December *Landfall* is before me with its cogent 'Australian Letter' focussed on international issues. It seems sym-

bolic that this, which is to follow it, must rub along the homely groove of our local efforts at self-realization, at getting to know one another's faces and voices as we are briefly, expensively, precariously and rewardingly gathered for a few days together.

*Vancouver*
*March 1956*

F. J. WEST

# *Near Enough*

## THE WRITING OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

A SOCIETY which is moving a frontier has neither the time nor the inclination to take stock of itself. Ebullient and self-confident frontiersmen are apt to regard any kind of self-examination or introspection as a form of weakness which cannot be afforded. No possibility of doubt, which is implied in looking at oneself or one's society, can be allowed to sap the conviction of one's own rightness or impair the assurance of a code of action. When, therefore, members of a society begin to take stock of themselves and their achievements, it is clear that the pioneer days are over: self-examination and criticism have set in. In the last few years Australians have begun to look at themselves in earnest. A foolish book by many hands attempted to take stock of Australia at mid-century. Now comes a social and political history which is intended to survey the whole growth of Australian society, to show its many sided development at any given time, and to reveal 'the essential spirit' of that society at every stage of its development.[1] Apart from the book's merits as history, it raises some interesting questions about the social and academic conditions which gave it birth, and about the writing of history in a society of the Australian type: most of all, it raises the fascinating question of the relation between history and the Great Australian Myth.

The belief that Australia is still a pioneer society, a young, vigorous and expanding nation, is one which is very widespread

[1] *Australia: A Social and Political History*. Edited by Gordon Greenwood. Angus and Robertson. 45s.

among Australians. The facts of life belie them, but they are irrelevant to a social myth of this kind. They produce the paradox that a society which believes the myth engages in activities which are most at odds with the belief. And nowhere does the ill-fitting garment of myth show its oddities more clearly than in the writing of history which, written to reveal the reality of society and its growth, is nevertheless written by men who are themselves, to a greater or lesser extent, the victims of the myth.

The myth of Australian society is summed up by the bush ballads. The ideal which every Australian sees in himself is the lean, rangy, horny-handed son of the great outback of the ballads: the digger who is contemptuous of authority, who holds fast to his cobbers because mateship is his prime virtue; the classic expression of his social outlook summed up in the opening words of Joseph Furphy's *Such is Life*—'unemployed at last'. It is almost too easy to observe that Australia is not such a society as appears in the myth. On the contrary it is predominantly urban, and the practical ambitions of Australians do not result in the activities of a digger but in the ownership of his own house and garden, his own car, attendance at the football ground or the race course; and the nearest that he ever comes to the bush is a week-end trip or a day's picnic. Such indeed is life. The standards which are sought are not pioneer but petty bourgeois: they derive not from the diggers but from the upper working and lower middle class of Victorian England which is perhaps the most important single element in the formation of Australian society. The convicts, the diggers of Eureka, the squatters, lend colour to the myth but not much substance to the body of society.

Reflections of this kind spring to mind on reading Professor Greenwood's book. How do he and his contributors explain the contradiction between the myth and the reality? The reader will search the book in vain not merely for an answer but for any recognition that there is such a question to be asked. And the fact that the question goes a-begging leads to a disappointing result. The framework of the book, the chapter headings, raise the expectation that here is a new approach to the writing of Australian history. Closer examination reveals that the work follows the conventional pattern and accepts the old assumptions. There is the same preoccupation with the early days of settlement: the convicts, the squattocracy, Eureka. The same old questions are still asked, and the one which dominates Australian historical thinking crops up in each chapter; When did Australia become a nation? The obsession with nationhood derives partly from the

acceptance of the myth: history underwrites the legend of the bush ballads. The answers offered show a bewildering variety. One says after transportation ceased; another, with the gold rushes; a third, the 1890's; a fourth, the first world war; a fifth, the second world war. What are the characteristics of a nation? This seems to be simply a matter of definition and it is carelessness in an historian to use concepts loosely when a little thought could provide adequate definition. The subtlest of the writers, Professor Partridge, who significantly is not an historian, recognizes that the 'process towards independence and national maturity' is still going on; an advance on assigning nationhood to dateable events, but still thinking it worth-while to ask and answer the question. The myth is not, of course, the sole reason for this preoccupation with nationhood. Part at least comes from the Marxist tradition of history which is entrenched in some of the Australian universities; in particular Sydney. This approach rules out, by definition, some questions as not worth asking, but more important it has led to heavy concentration on the economic aspect of Australian history and the class struggle, whether this be the squattocracy or the Labour Party, the object of so much research to the virtual exclusion of other political forces. Since the Labour Party has been closely connected with Australian nationalism, it is easy to see how historians arrive at their main interest. And the consciousness of economic factors and class antagonisms fits in well with the assumptions of the bush ballads.

It is the loose assumptions which the writers make in composing their various chapters which are most disturbing. It must be said that on a purely factual level the book is competent enough: it is a convenient quarry for the diligent seeker after fact. But this is not what the book was intended to be. Professor Greenwood and his contributors had a rather higher aim: to bridge the gap which they believed to exist between the brilliant interpretative essays of Sir Keith Hancock and Professor Crawford and the learned monographs written for historical specialists; a gap which the *Cambridge History of the British Empire* did nothing to fill. In spite of the fact that this present volume is the work of six men it is intended to be a single history. Although no single line of interpretation has been imposed by the editor, the book is intended to hang together as a consistent pattern. An attempt has also been made to avoid repetition of fact, except in cases where repetition serves the needs of interpretation 'from a different vantage ground'. This is an ambitious aim but it is not the sole justification of the book. Professor Greenwood believes that each generation needs

to re-assess the historical process of which it is a part; and the *Cambridge History* being written twenty years or more ago, the present book is designed to provide such a re-assessment.

From one point of view the critic stands disarmed by the frank statement of an editor's aim: he cannot pretend not to know what the book sets out to do. On the other hand it is dangerous to expose so clearly the standard of which one's achievement falls short. Naturally one asks 'Does it succeed?' There is certainly a gap in Australian historiography but it is very doubtful that Professor Greenwood has identified it correctly. Where are the learned monographs of which he writes? The answer must be: largely non-existent. The void in Australian history is precisely the absence of the detailed, learned, scholarly work. There may be a little more available to the present writers than Sir Keith Hancock had at his disposal, but hardly anything more than Professor Crawford could draw upon. The brilliant interpretative essays of these two scholars rest upon learned research; they are not an alternative to it. There is an uneasy implication in Professor Greenwood's remarks that the two types of history are fundamentally different whereas, in fact, they are merely the reflection of the abilities of different men: few can be at once the pedant and the artist. For anyone other than the specialist, these essays are probably sufficient, resting as they do on the research which had been done at the time of their writing and embodying the reflections upon it of a single distinguished scholar. Six men could not write a history which was a unity in any significant sense unless they accepted the conventional pattern. What is new in the book is some factual information, but it is not enough to support so ambitious a project. A large number of important sources for Australian history are still virtually untouched and until a considerable amount of work has been done, the basis of learned monographs will not exist in sufficient quantity to justify a large scale reinterpretation of Australian history. The absence of this learned base is evident in almost every chapter of the book. There is the irresistible impression that the core of each writer's work consists of a regurgitated doctoral dissertation or its equivalent, embroidered round with opinions culled from general histories. Dr Gollan, for example, is learned on the Australian Labour Party, but he dovetails his original research into the traditional and well known story of federation in Australia; and much of the dovetailing in other chapters is not nearly so well done as his. The absence of the learned monographs and therefore of the gap which the editor perceives, drives one back to his second justification of the

book: that each generation needs to re-assess the historical process of which it is a part. Why? Need one assume that the previous generations were wrong; or right? Either assumption is stultifying. The motive for writing history has not yet become that of fascinating posterity, or at least future historians, by one's opinions rather than by one's scholarship, although Professor Butterfield may lead us dangerously close to it. Of course an historian's involvement in the life of his own generation is interesting, but it does not follow that he should ask the question 'What do I think about this from my position in relation to my society?' rather than the primary question an historian should ask, 'Is it true?' In any case, Professor Greenwood's justification does not imply that conscious recognition of an historian's involvement in society will enable him to make a detached re-assessment. The Marxist tradition of Australian history defines the historical process in terms which exclude, as I have suggested, a type of involvement of which the writers are still largely unconscious. The need to re-assess in each generation may therefore only result in handing down to successive generations a growing weight of error.

If the book fails by two of the standards which its editor sets forth, it can be said to succeed in a third: providing a comparatively detailed account. It is useful to have a quarry into which one can delve for the raw material of history. Professor Greenwood's volume provides a great deal of interesting information, but even this has its limitations. Interpretation obviously affects one's selection or gathering of fact, and the limitations of the conventional view are reflected in the material which supports it. A pioneer society may find the attitude 'near enough' necessary for existence or survival because it cannot afford, or be bothered with, more precise workmanship, but this attitude passes unless it is preserved by the myth, in which case it is a pleasing poetic fancy but a social hindrance otherwise. The loose assumptions scattered through the book are, no doubt, 'near enough'. Combined with the assumptions made by Marxist history they solve minor mysteries of fact but add the greater mystery of interpretation.

FREDERICK PAGE

# *Contemporary Music in New Zealand*

IN DECEMBER, 1955, the International Society for Contemporary Music, New Zealand Branch, gave its eighth concert in seven years. The New Zealand Branch is a modest one, giving, as a rule, one concert a year (two in 1950) in Wellington, working on small funds, appearing in out-of-the-way halls, and achieving little in the way of general recognition. As it is so little known, some account of its activities may be welcome. Programmes have been as follows (to save space no list of performers is given):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1949 | Bernard Stevens: | Sonata for violin and piano |
| | Douglas Lilburn: | Sonata for piano (1948) |
| | Khachaturian: | Trio for clarinet, violin and piano |
| | Hindemith: | Two duos for violin and 'cello |
| | Honegger: | Sonata No. 2 for violin and piano |
| 1950 | i. David Farquhar: | Sonatina for piano |
| | Szymanowski: | Sonata for violin and piano op. 9 |
| | Eve Christeller: | Duo for violin and 'cello |
| | H. J. Findlay: | Trio for horn, violin and piano |
| | ii. Shostakovitch: | Sonata for 'cello and piano |
| | Hans Colombi: | Five songs to words by Eileen Duggan |
| | Milhaud: | Sonata for two violins |
| | Benjamin Frankel: | Sonata for solo violin |
| | Walter Piston: | Sonata for flute and piano |
| | Poulenc: | The Story of Babar for narrator and piano |
| 1951 | Stravinsky: | Serenade for piano |
| | Honegger: | Duos for violin and 'cello |
| | Poulenc: | Calligrammes, song cycle |
| | Schoenberg: | Six little piano pieces op. 19 |
| | Honegger: | Songs |
| | Hindemith: | Sonata for 'cello and piano |
| 1952 | P. Racine Fricker: | Sonata for violin and piano |
| | Douglas Lilburn: | Elegy, poems by Alistair Campbell |
| | Milhaud: | Suite for violin, clarinet and piano |

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|---|---|---|
| 1953 | Stravinsky: | Sonata for two pianos |
| | Aaron Copland: | Songs from poems by Emily Dickinson |
| | Honegger: | Sonata No. 1 for violin and piano |
| | Prokofiev: | Quintet for oboe, clarinet, violin, viola, double bass |
| 1954 | Stravinsky: | Concerto for two pianofortes |
| | Robert Burch: | Four preludes for piano |
| | Alan Rawsthorne: | Quartet for clarinet and strings |
| 1955 | Humphrey Searle: | The Owl and the Pussy-cat, for narrator, flute, 'cello, piano |
| | Sancan: | Sonata for flute and piano |
| | David Farquhar: | Three songs for voice and piano |
| | Skalkottas: | Passacaglia for piano |
| | Stravinsky: | Septet for clarinet, bassoon, horn, violin, viola, 'cello, piano |

When three Wellington musicians, Francis Rosner, Dorothy Davies, and the writer, met in 1949 to discuss the formation of a branch of the I.S.C.M.—and I should like here to record how much our branch owes to Mr Rosner's enthusiasm and energy—some doubts were expressed. We knew that in 1923, composers writing in an experimental, or shall we say, in a new manner, required a platform, and that musicians such as Busoni, Edward Dent, Ravel, Schoenberg, Stravinsky came forward willingly to provide such, and that by 1949, as we were wanting to begin, the battle had already been won. It seemed that we were simply coming late to the party. But the party has just begun. Bartok's No. 3 can be played in Wellington but not in Lower Hutt: an eminent violinist arrives in Auckland in 1955 to announce that he is come to introduce modern music to New Zealand audiences, festivals of music by John Ireland and Gordon Jacob are given in Christchurch (God bless us all), and Edwin Carr's *Mardi Gras* overture (1950) remains unheard in his native land, because it is said to be unplayable.

Another doubt, a criticism of the I.S.C.M. itself, was whether contemporary music is best served by a group, working in a small way on the fringe of the ordinary concert-giving world. The answer is that we have provided a platform for this music and it is hard to see where otherwise it could have been played. An immediate advantage was the link to be formed with European music and musicians. We have sent representatives to festivals in Salzburg

and Stockholm, usually Government Bursary students. In 1952 we were invited for the first time to submit works for performance at the Salzburg festival, and Ronald Tremain's *Theme and variations for two violins* was accepted and performed. This year we again submitted works; *Variations for Orchestra* by Barry Moss was accepted for performance at Oslo in June 1956. I think it a good thing that an international jury at least knows we are on the map.

We have our small audience of fifty to sixty, which appears to be the number willing to turn out to hear new music; it is not a negligible number, as anyone who has attended a concert of new music in London will know. We met difficulties from the start; one or two composers, and performers, horned in, resolute to push their wares, unaware of what the I.S.C.M. was about; one or two showed a bland interest for a short time and vanished; the affiliation fee to the parent society, instead of being a nominal two or three guineas, turned out to be £40. Wellington newspapers have virtually ignored our concerts. But we survived. Our subscription to the I.S.C.M. somehow gets paid, the N.Z.B.S. has given us generously whatever help we have asked for; one should note that in England and on the Continent the broadcasting services and the universities have strongly supported the I.S.C.M. from its beginnings; we feel more than ever that we want to continue. We have had none of the hilarious junketings Professor Dent records in the I.S.C.M. journal, *Music To-day;* the most we can record is that at our first concert, at the end of the Honegger, a woman in the audience was heard to groan and was seen to slide to the floor in a faint. No one boos, no one hisses, but for some, the concerts have been among the most pleasurable given in Wellington. Professional players have played for us entirely without fee; difficult works nave been prepared, in the knowledge that they may be given only one performance; the happy relations among players have been one of the more pleasant features of our work. And we preen ourselves when told by visitors that we are more active than any group in Australia.

We are a small society; perhaps our aim is too low. Perhaps we should whip up support, announce a series of explanatory lectures with recordings and slides, spend pounds on advertising in the newspapers and beat the big drum. I wonder. The list above speaks for itself. It would be agreeable to have funds to invite one of the visiting quartets to play for us Berg's *Lyric Suite*, to command once an orchestral concert.

But things are on the move; a musician recently returned from

London tells me that students at the colleges there now come forward with Bartok's solo violin sonata; it is not so many years since Menuhin played this work in the Wellington Town Hall unannounced lest news of its inclusion should drive the public away. Suddenly these works that were once so inaccessible are here.

# REVIEWS

THE OLDEST MANUSCRIPTS IN NEW ZEALAND. David M. Taylor. *New Zealand Council for Educational Research.* 42s.

IT IS a reflexion on the University of New Zealand that this important book had to be compiled by an amateur—though Mr Taylor is an amateur in the best sense of the word. If ever a task called for co-operative effort such as a university can best organize it is the survey of mss from some nine countries in some seven languages, ranging in date from the twelfth to the sixteenth century and in content from Antiphons to Aristotle. It requires a knowledge of palaeography, liturgiology, and textual criticism that can hardly be acquired outside America or Europe (where one or two of our best scholars did in fact acquire it). No one is more aware of this than Mr Taylor; but he knows also that local interest in a detailed report of the kind that such scholars could provide would be almost negligible. He has therefore decided, and wisely, to aim at a guide for the layman rather than at a *catalogue raisonné*; and he has at least the advantage over any outside expert of knowing how much the average New Zealander needs to be told when looking at a Lactantius, or a Lectionary, and how much Latin (viz., all of it) must be translated for his benefit. Whether the average New Zealander will pay two guineas for such assistance is another matter: he may complain that Mr Taylor devotes too much space to accounts of his researches and to earlier erroneous descriptions in advertisements, or Shaw's out-of-date guide to the Auckland collections; that a few of the plates, attractive as most of the thirty-three are, could have been spared; and that Mr Taylor occasionally comes near to polemic. But he cannot complain that this book, with its pleasing jacket, and excellent coloured frontispiece, is produced in a fashion unworthy of its subject. The professed medievalist may have other quibbles: the Index is inadequate, and so, inevitably, are certain descriptions; by far the oldest piece of ms in New Zealand (the Dunedin papyrus fragment illustrated in Professor Henderson's admirable lecture on early Bibles)

is not mentioned, nor the single Psalter leaf also listed by Henderson as '9a'; but it is unlikely that Mr Taylor has omitted anything important. Thanks to his long labours, the expert now knows what to look for and where to look, and can proceed with his detailed studies and comparisons.

In number, quality, and variety, these early mss will surprise even those few already familiar with some of the collections containing them. The growth of those collections, Grey's in particular, deserves at least a sentence or two in our cultural history—and one notes that several mss have arrived within the last decade (a twelfth-century ms can still be bought for less than a television set). We have had no tycoon-collectors like Huntington or Folger, no great bibliophiles like Rosenbach or Newton. But neither has there been much attempt on the part of our colleges (if Mr Taylor's bibliography is any criterion) to acquire the standard reference books and facsimiles that would make study of these mss fascinating and fruitful; which is the more curious when we recall that Grey made his magnificent gift to the Auckland Library in order to celebrate the founding of the college nearby. Though there are no less than ten Books of Hours in New Zealand (two at least being remarkably beautiful) there is apparently no copy of Leroquais' *Livres d'Heures*, indispensable for collation of such works. Hidden in the British and Foreign Bible Society's office is a Psalter which from Mr Taylor's description may belong to the best period of East Midland work; yet evidently no college library possesses facsimiles of the Tickhill Psalter, or even Queen Mary's, though a good array of such reproductions could be bought for less than a tenth of the amount regularly spent on sending a representative to vice-cancellarial junketings. Is there behind this academic indifference to medieval studies the vulgar notion that medieval books may be quaint, and even pretty, but of course they were written by superstitious old monks before the great Enlightenment? If such a notion survives, our English departments —not to mention our historians—have been teaching to poor effect, and it is time to close our Luick, our Leavis, or our Burckhardt (though to be sure he would have had no truck with such half-truths), and open our Ruskin, our Henry Adams, or our Bolgar; the *Classical Heritage* of Mr Bolgar, perhaps the most important work of its kind since the *Allegory of Love*, providing a pertinent commentary on some of the very texts that Mr Taylor describes.

Despite the handicaps in question (and for their attempts to overcome them Mr Taylor and a few others within and without the colleges deserve all praise) it is now possible for a New Zealander to obtain a fair knowledge of medieval mss without going beyond his own shores or buying more than a few cheap Bodleian picture books and Miss Rickert's volume in the Pelican History of Art. And there are plenty of comparatively simple tasks to hand: the Auckland *Boece* of Jean de Meun should be collated with the

recent critical edition of that work (which will show how groundless is the view that it was the original copy made for Philip the Fair); the illustrations in the Turnbull *De Musica* should be compared with those in other copies; the texts in MS 13 (Moralia) should be identified. How fruitful such enquiries may be will appear from a forthcoming edition of the Latin text of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* which includes readings from MS 31, a copy that would have been ignored had it not caught the eye of a friend of the editor. Meanwhile, doubtless, hundreds of us will continue annually to plod round the show libraries of the world; but if we do so without inspecting our own riches first we shall be wasting our passage-money. Mr Taylor's pioneer work should encourage our libraries to add to this wealth, repair some deficiencies, and make their displays of the books he describes more attractive. Perhaps it will also encourage them to arrange a joint exhibition of the best of these, with lecture-commentary, or better still, to send such an exhibition round the country: Mr Taylor's book would make an admirable and sufficient guide to such a display. Perhaps, finally, it will stimulate the preparation of a similar survey of our early printed books, some of which are unique and several of which are not to be found in England's oldest libraries. But it is now clear that such surveys, to be of maximum use, cannot be made on a shoestring. The Fulbright Fund has sent Mr Taylor to examine 'the place of theology in American universities'. If it would enable the compilers of this next catalogue to examine cognate holdings in the great American libraries, it would be performing a still greater service. The present work is sponsored by the N.Z.C.E.R., for reasons not obvious at a distance; but whatever the cause, we give grateful thanks for the result.

*J. A. W. Bennett*

THE SUNLIT HOUR. Ruth Gilbert. *Allen and Unwin*. 5s.

THE SECRET PARABLES. Dora Hagemeyer. *The Pegasus Press*. 12s. 6d.

TWO POEMS. Louis Johnson. *The Pegasus Press*. 2s. 6d.

FRAGMENTS OF LIVING PEKING. Rewi Alley. Chosen and Edited by H. Winston Rhodes. *N.Z. Peace Council*.

MISS GILBERT'S verse is unpretentious, simple, direct, carefully made. There is in consequence a purity about it, an element here and there of the Christian naiveté of Smart or Clare. Yet there is nothing that comes within range of lines like Smart's

> Spinks and ouzels sing sublimely
> We too have a saviour born;

Whiter blossoms burst untimely
On the blest mosaic thorn.

And one can scarcely be consistently less artful than this and still expect to be heard above the Twentieth Century din. The personal poems are embarrassingly honest; a point is reached where the invitation to eavesdrop on such things as a mother's brooding over the child in her womb must be declined. Art demands some objectivity, however slight.

Miss Gilbert's is a poetry of statement, the mood predominantly elegiac, the tone that of a whispered prayer, perfectly articulated by a girl at finishing school. One's hopes are raised slightly (despite 'tall and dreaming') by the first four lines of the poem 'Of Rooks':

Loud-voiced where wiser birds are dumb
These unrepentant slatterns come
Rousing the tall and dreaming trees
To garrulous domesticities.

But even the 'unrepentant slatterns' must be whitewashed to make fit subject for feminine rumination, and the poem concludes

And yet, of rooks, this I would say
That, home at the warm close of day
They seem, when dance and clamour cease
Fit guardians of each green field's peace.

Mrs Hagemeyer's poetic gift is probably equal to Miss Gilbert's. Her poems are less successful because more pretentious. With the mind of a *littérateur* rather than of a poet she finds subjects in lines by Shakespeare and quotations by Schweitzer on Bach; she imitates Omar Khayyam, analyses (in sixteen lines) the mind of Dostoievsky, reacts poetically to Plato. There are the usual confident generalizations about 'Time's mighty curtain', 'the magnificence of life', 'the two great laws of nature'. When a concrete experience lies behind a poem it is of madonna lilies or a bird in the rock garden.

What is most noticeable about these poems (Miss Gilbert's too) is the complete absence of a truly poetic imagination; that is, of a mind which spontaneously fuses objects into associations that at once illuminate a state of mind. Poetry for Mrs Hagemeyer is statement, differing from prose only in being regularly (usually tritely) rhythmed, adjectivally coloured, and varied with a few old rhetorical tricks. How, for example, is this different from prose:

I do not think I ever saw the stars
Before I walked across the field that night.
Not that they seemed more eloquent or bright . . .

or this

Somehow Scarlatti and the evening star
Combined to give direction to the day

except that the rhythms are tiresomely unvaried and there is a rhyme attached?

When Mr Louis Johnson comes on to the scene we know at least that we are dealing with a poet. His numerous shortcomings are the failures *of* a poet, not the failure *to be* one. Whatever he lacks, he can still 'force a marriage between the dark and light', or ask

> Do you choose your fate?
> Doesn't it come—between the bread and cheese,
> Or steaming on the plate?

We know there is a real horse in the shafts, even if in the case of these poems it lacks the necessary harness to pull us along with it.

The writing of long poems about the state of things at the present time is always a dangerous task, and one which Mr Johnson seems unqualified to tackle. 'The Passionate Man and the Casual Man' is an attempt to contrast present sordidness with past glory. 'No creature of our time', we are told, 'can easily lift his yoke of history.' If Mr Johnson doesn't lift this particular yoke, he at least wears it lightly; so lightly in fact that after a reading of the poem we are left certain of only one fact: this poet doesn't like the age he's living in, and thinks the past (a vague and unspecified past) superior. It is not that one would necessarily quarrel with such a judgement if it could be made on a sound historical basis: in 'The Waste Land' the river that 'sweats oil and tar' slips beautifully into scenes out of a precise and convincing past. Or the contrast might be acceptable as a moment of personal nostalgia—

> Romantic Ireland's dead and gone.

But Mr Johnson gives his poem all the weight of historical revelation, and none of its precision. It is difficult to treat the result seriously. Could anyone accept, for example, his easy generalization of the present as a time when every face is a mask, when 'no vital sign of animating tasks, of inner purpose, gleams'; or the personification of the past as a rather tiresome 'Passionate Man' troubling about 'the beautiful and true', 'Great virtues', and 'wisdom'? It is, surely, all too simple.

In the sort of foreword one comes to expect from him, Mr Johnson walks in backwards announcing himself in a loud voice. With reference to 'News of Molly Bloom', the other of these poems, he writes 'The Joycean themes have undergone my own interpretation, though the ideas seem to have support in critical circles.' Just what is meant by 'interpretation' and 'ideas' is not made clear by a reading of the poem; the ghostly support of unnamed 'critical circles' remains vague. Released from the disciplines of rhymed verse and dramatic argument, Mr Johnson's futile

capaucity for puning runs on as rude-iculously as this—six pages of it. The author regards it as a 'work in progress'. Heaven forbid!

Rewi Alley's poems are the most readable of this group, if for no other reason than that their author has a subject. He writes, not as a person who thinks it would be nice to be a poet, but as one who has a positive faith and is moved to write because he sees in everything around him a part of the order which that faith provides. He writes, as Wordsworth would have the poet do, 'with his eye on the object'.

This is not to say that there is anything in *Fragments of Living Peking* that deserves the title of 'poem' as much as Mr Johnson's 'Passionate Man' does. Mr Johnson remains, however unevenly, the artist: he recognizes that there is such a thing as form (I am ignoring for the moment 'News of Molly Bloom'). Mr Alley's verses are the hurried asides of a man much too busy in other ways ever to become an artist in any true sense of the term. And pieces like 'The Accused' are simply propagandist: however much we approve and are moved, they must be recognized as such.

Yet there is an impression that accumulates as one reads (it could not be represented by quotation) of sun, dust, brown peasant bodies, ordered movement, growth. It is achieved by a mind that thinks, not in generalizations, but always in terms of specific scenes, which are so vividly and consistently brought before the eye that the elements which compose them become a kind of symbolism for the ideal that must underlie all Mr Alley's work.

*C. K. Stead*

LAND OF MY CHILDREN. Helen Wilson. *Paul's.* 10s. 6d.

AS THE 'story of a piece of land and of the people who farmed it' this book is done very well indeed. Its free arrangement of facts allows it to pass as fiction and the rightness of their interpretation well qualifies it to be offered as a 'piece of domestic history'. It is in this last category that its chief value lies. As fiction, it is competently written; the characterization is good, the local colour is unobtrusive yet apt, the incidents credible and with one small exception, convincing enough to make the stories contained in it of sufficient interest in themselves, but they are in no way remarkable. It is not the stories which are particularly good; it is the story. And that story is a piece of our domestic history—a definite period of latter-day pioneering of which few are better qualified to tell than Mrs Wilson.

The book covers the period from the eighties to the beginning of the second World War and although this section of time is accidentally framed by the author's span of years it contains a phase of New

Zealand pioneering which is quite distinct from those which preceded and followed it. By the eighties, the day of the New Zealand Company and the various overseas promoters was over. The local government had become responsible for the promotion of organized settlement. It had assumed a responsibility that was to increase with the years and finally place it in the position of being the pioneer itself, handing over new lands to the settlers only after they had been broken in. The government schemes were much on the same lines as those of its forerunners. A block of land was acquired, a site for a township planned and the land surveyed into town, suburban and outer lots. They were, however, more realistic than many of the earlier projects. The government, at least, was on the spot and had some knowledge of local conditions and the new settlers were drawn largely from the local population. Communications by this time had been greatly improved and although immediate access to the newly acquired blocks was bad enough there were no longer any appalling initial difficulties such as faced the immigrant Albertlanders some twenty years earlier. Nevertheless, although Mrs Wilson's characters were more aware of what was ahead of them, they were much the same at bottom and the land hunger they shared was no guarantee of land sense.

*Land of my Children*, as indicated by the introductory fiction of the young man returning from the wars and seeing with new eyes the fatness and the beauty of the land, is, in a sense, a success story but it is a success made up of failures. Incompetence, ineptness and accident eliminated many of the settlers and finally the black slump submerged all. The land alone survived as their witness.

Mrs Wilson's theme is a choice of necessity or, at least, of circumstance, yet one cannot but realize what an excellent choice it is, and although agreeing that it is the treatment and not the subject that makes a good book, wondering why so few of our writers make use of it. The very range of this book puts limitations on the author. It is too wide to be intensive even though its inclusiveness was probably restricted by considerations of space. The people in it are observed rather than lived but they are observed by an intelligent and kindly person with similar experience and one who possesses an excellent gift of being able to communicate that experience to others.

*Frank Gadd*

LET THE BIRDS FLY. Vance Palmer. *Angus and Robertson*. 16s.

BLACK CARGO AND OTHER STORIES. John Morrison. *Australasian Book Society*. 16s. 6d.

THE MIRAGE. F. B. Vickers. *Australasian Book Society*. 18s. 6d.

ADVENTURE IN PRAGUE AND OTHER STORIES. Salamon Dembitzer. Translated by Vera Jones. *Sydney, Villon Press*. 14s. 6d.

ONE LOOKS at some of the stories in Mr Palmer's collection, ('The Silky Oak', 'Serenade', 'Home Front'), and wonders what Mr Morrison and Mr Vickers would have made of them. Something harder, no doubt; something more violent and much less literary; another sort of occasion, at least, celebrating quite other values. They represent a point of view so opposed to Mr Palmer's, the social document as against the work of literature, that the whole question is worth examination.

Mr Palmer is seventy-one and he has written a great deal—stories, novels, plays, criticism, even a little verse. He is a professional man of letters; though here the professionalism seems a little habitual and without much nervous force. He is relaxed, more easily satisfied than he has sometimes been, and knows no longer, it would seem, the dissatisfaction of telling an old, old story in an old and easy way. He contrives no tension for his language and, partly because of that, and partly of themselves contributing to that relaxation, the stories are slack and vaguely gossipy, generalized in feeling and action. They are stories in which Mr Palmer raises many potentially heroic themes and consistently denies the heroic agility and exploration of their development. The statement is calm in tone, conceals few subtleties, evokes little response: the characters are all blank centre like a charcoal sketch; or are like little, elegantly human lumps of clay awaiting an animating breath. One is disappointed.

In the company, however, which here he willy-nilly keeps, Mr Palmer takes credit for more than a sort of bland dexterity and right-mindedness. One may, for the purposes of comparison, see him as the liberal representative of the standards, the values of art; one may cast him, without intending an impertinence, in the objective and formally disciplined role of artist. For, comparison or no, Mr Morrison and Mr Vickers are troubled by no such formal notion. They do not so much write as bombard us with painful and knotty missiles, knocking in our pates with excellent intentions. Their stance, their address, their very manners are not those of Mr Palmer. Their information, too, is of a different order and demonstrates a different emphasis. What they lack, a delicacy not so much of feeling as of craft, is possessed by Mr Palmer in professional measure. But, having attributed to Mr Palmer this shrewd professional stare, I must remark in Mr Morrison and Mr

Vickers the harder sinew, the muscular passion, the cruder force of their vitality, and the rather shrill yell of the literature of protest, the righteous fervour.

Mr Palmer looks at people: Mr Morrison has not quite won over his tendency to do that, though he shares, in the main, Mr Vickers's habit of looking at ideas of people, and the stare reveals a particularity, a social and political mote. Again, Mr Palmer's concern is a larger thing, and if he fails or falters he is just that much farther from any convenient handhold: he puts up his lamp, as it were, in a larger darkness. But failure is relative, and too harsh a word. To assess Mr Morrison and Mr Vickers by the standard of assessment Mr Palmer demands would be to remark their bald failure. But one cannot quite hold, with the purity of mind that suggests, to the firm and static notion of art.

The stories in *Let The Birds Fly* touch upon the mechanical facts of the human condition, and range over a variety of human situations; but they touch, for this reviewer, without illumination and range without much depth of perception. Unless, that is, I have completely missed the point, and Mr Palmer is really saying that just this movement and motion and opposition, even so simply presented, *is* the human condition, and is further saying that nothing may be said of motive except what the reader may find in himself. But I have no sense of having missed *that* point.

The stories in *Black Cargo* are mainly of the Australian waterfront, union solidarity, the workers' fight for their rights. As stories they display a considerable knowledge of these things, but don't manage to say much more. One might say that Mr Morrison has chosen to deal with the opposition of 'attitudes' over specific political and social questions, rather than with the conflict of personalities in the unspecific chaos of life. He writes his best stories when he relieves himself of this duty of explicit social comment: 'The Sleeping Doll', though dressed as for tourists in the national costume, or national disguise, of laconic humour and sardonic monosyllable, is an amusing story, and its slight guying tone is a relief.

*The Mirage* is the story of a young half-caste aboriginal—or half-caste European—brought up to reject his aboriginal inheritance and faced with the impossibility of integration in a white community. Racism, economic and moral oppression, miscegenation, violence—the tale is familiar enough. This is not, however, a novel: Mr Vickers's purpose is too direct for that; he is too much worked on by his material to pretend to dispassion, uninvolvement in formal terms, objectivity. It is not a novel because its direct aim is to prompt action, to promote reform by means of dramatic indictment. But in denying it that description one must admit its passionate existence in other terms. It is, like *Black Cargo*, very sincere and not at all well written. Mr Morrison and Mr Vickers have hearts so big, and so much in the right place, that one feels

it to be a mere cavil not to be content with that. But one is not. Mr Palmer is concerned with literature, and with everything implicit in that; they are concerned with society, and with literature as a social instrument.

*Adventure in Prague*, translated from the German, is offered as a piece of fine printing, which it is not: neither is it in any way an adventure.

*Maurice Duggan*

THE COPY FOR THE FOLIO TEXT OF RICHARD III, WITH A NOTE ON THE COPY FOR THE FOLIO TEXT OF KING LEAR. J. K. Walton. *Auckland University College*. Monograph Series No. 1. 20s.

AUCKLAND University College is to be congratulated on the publication of this work of Shakespearian scholarship. Mr Walton has made a valuable contribution towards the solution of textual problems in two of Shakespeare's plays. The book, moreover, advertises a regard for those less obvious values which are too commonly forgotten in a 'Redbrick' University. It gives one confidence that academic consciences are sharpened in New Zealand and that today we can at least be sure that no one in Auckland will suggest that the standard of Latin I be lowered for the convenience of budding lawyers.

It is impossible to examine and to come to conclusions on the whole of Mr Walton's closely-knit argument in the compass of a short review. Nor can I deal with the very important notes on *King Lear*. I can, however, consider what he has to say about the text of *Richard III* and, after suggesting criticisms of certain instances in his accumulation of evidence, use these as token reasons for a general conclusion on the validity of the work. They will serve to show the *kind* of argument which leads me to my general judgement. I should state that judgement now. Mr Walton makes his case with admirable clarity and compactly-wrought logic; but I do not feel that the case is quite proven.

Mr Walton sets out to prove that the Folio text of *Richard III* was printed from a Third Quarto (Q3), corrected by reference to a manuscript copy. It has been supposed hitherto that the Folio text (F) was printed from a Sixth Quarto (Q6) and similarly corrected, except for two passages (III.i.166 and V.iii.48 et seq.) which were printed for some reason or other from Q3. Mr Walton's argument has three parts. He seeks to dispose of the textual evidence linking F with Q6; to establish evidence linking the F text throughout with Q3; to throw doubt on the various conjectural reasons that have been given for the 'intrusive' passages from Q3 which by common agreement are to be found in F and to give

his own reasons why Q3 is followed more closely in these passages than elsewhere. I deal briefly with the first two of these arguments, for unless these are fully established the *raison d'être* of the third is obviated.

There are certainly a number of *exclusive* agreements between F and Q6 (pp.23 et seq.). No single one of these is conclusive, and Mr Walton cogently suggests how each one can be disregarded. But the fact is that they occur. Three of them are instances in which the Folio 'editor' (that 'shadow'!) has or seems to have emended the Q6 reading to improve either sense or metre (p.26). Here is one of them, III.v.66.

| | |
|---|---|
| F | With all your iust proceedings in this *case* |
| Q1-5 | *cause* |
| Q6 | *ease* |

It is true that the F compositor might have substituted *case* for *cause*, for the two spellings were almost interchangeable. But if he had *ease* before him he would certainly be more likely to change the non-sense to sense by printing *case*. And a printer would be more likely to print *case* for *ease* than for *cause*. I fancy, too, that *cause* was more common.

In another instance the 'shadow' editor of F seems to have mended the metre (III.v.74).

| | |
|---|---|
| F | There, at your meetest vantage of the time |
| Q1-5 | meetst advantage |
| Q6 | meetest advantage |

The F version may be a correction of Q1-5. But, if F was printed from Q6, this is what might have happened. In my opinion, Mr Walton has not disposed *beyond debate* of the suggested connection between F and Q6.

When he comes to the evidence for linking F and Q3 throughout, he has a very persuasive case, and it will be difficult to answer it. There are one or two comments to be made.

Mr Walton's strongest evidence is found in readings that are exclusive to Q3 and F as against Q6. The argument he puts forward is complicated and it depends to some extent on the theory (certainly well-established) that the Folio was set up by two compositors, A and B, and that these compositors had distinct printing habits which show in their work—in their use of italics, in speech prefixes, in spelling (pp.61 et seq.). I take an example of each.

(a) Compositor B seems to favour italics for certain proper names. Compositor B set a passage at IV.iii.46-57 in which the name 'Buckingham' (and other proper names) is set up twice in roman (p.68). The name is italicized in Q6 but is in roman in Q3 as well as F. In other words, the compositor, if he had had to set the passage up from Q6, would have had to change his printing habit, even though his exemplum coincided with it. This is

very forceful taken with the other examples. It is worth remarking, however, that most of the relevant examples are in roman type; that the compositor was (Mr Walton agrees) often in a hurry; and that it is easier to *go on* setting up roman than to change for one word to italic.

(b) At I.iii.309 there are curious differences between F, Q3 and Q6 in the speech prefix (pp.74 et seq.). Q3 has (it would seem, correctly) *Qu.* Q6 has (oddly) *Hast.* F. has *Mar.* and this is equally odd, since Margaret made her exit six lines earlier. Mr Walton explains this by pointing out that compositor B on pp. 177 and 179 of F always changed Q.M. etc. to *Mar.*/Margaret. This is certainly so. He goes on to suggest that the same compositor saw *Qu.* (in Q3) and read it as *Q.M.* or *Qu.M.* by mistake. This is possible. But is it not a more likely explanation that the collator had cancelled *Hast.* in the Q6 version and, taking it from the correcting manuscript, had written in *Qu.*? For to see *Qu. in handwriting* and to read it as *QM* was an easier mistake to make than to see *Qu. in print* and to read Q.M.

(c) Mr Walton's instances from spelling (p.77) are very forceful, but not conclusive. His strongest instance—it is difficult to resist it—is to be found at I.iii.344 where both F and Q3 have 'heare' for *here*, where Q6 has 'heere'. Compositor B, who set this up, normally spells the word as in Q6. This is, according to Mr Walton, the 'most telling instance' of a spelling variation in which F and Q3 agree. It is certainly very striking. The identity of the compositor, however, does not seem to make any difference here. If we look at the passage, we see that within the five lines following, we have 'heare' (for *hear*) and 'hearts'. It would be a coincidence—but not impossible—if these two instances of 'hear—', coming so closely after, had caught the eye of both compositors in the printing of Q3 and F.

Mr Walton has found two instances (p.82) where he believes that the 'editor' of F has made an emendation of Q3 rather than of Q6. Neither instance seems to me to have any force. On the other hand he has found one example (p.85) of a connection between F and Q3 which seems undeniable; for F and Q3 agree in an incorrect reading against the obviously more satisfactory reading in Q6.

What, then, can we conclude? Simply, perhaps, that there are difficulties in Mr Walton's argument, but considerably more in the view that F was printed, at least for five-sixths of the text, from Q6. It is possible that Mr Walton has said the last effective word on the matter. For myself, I should like to know very much more about the 'original manuscript' which was used to correct whichever quarto was used for the printing, Q3 or Q6, and I should particularly like to know its connections with Q3—or Q6.

I cannot conclude this review without mentioning and commenting on the brilliant emendation suggested by Professor Musgrove

and adopted by Mr Walton at V.i.104. Richmond has just said farewell to Derby, who has brought his support but also a warning about the dire dangers of making that support too obvious (p.116). Richmond prepares himself for sleep with these words:

| | |
|---|---|
| F | Ile strive with troubled *noise*, to take a Nap |
| Q3 and 6 | *thoughts* |
| Musgrove | *joys* |

Professor Musgrove's suggestion seems to have everything to recommend it. Derby's news is mixed, good and bad, giving rise to joy but 'troubled' joy. The misreading of 'i' for 'n' is only a minim (and therefore a minimal) error. Everything seems right with the emendation except one thing—is it necessary? Richmond is in camp. The battle is to be set and joined 'early in the morning' (V.iii.88). Dawn is already breaking in the East (V.iii.87). There would certainly be a trouble of noise in the camp enough to disturb Richmond's short slumber. We read the line in all the excitement of early morning, with the light breaking, with battle preparing, and the reading 'troubled noise' becomes at least possible.

*Arthur Sewell*

THE MAN IN OUR LIVES. John Brodie (John Guthrie). *Neville Spearman.* 7s. 6d.

THIS short portrait of his father has been re-issued as a posthumous tribute to the author. Since this is his best work, the choice is a good one, but for those looking for a biography, or a chronicle of New Zealand family life, the result will be disappointing. *The Man in Our Lives* is a light-hearted sketch without the depth of a background. At times the story is very funny, at others a lack of detachment mars the clarity. The ministrations with the slipper seem still to smart, the chopping down of precious trees still brings the memory of the mother's tears. One questions the validity of treating these, and other aspects of a more than life-size head of the house, with humour.

Apart from a drawing of Mount Egmont on the jacket, there is nothing to link the book with New Zealand. Certainly the theme is a universal one, and for novelists the exigencies of earning a living often impose an implied rejection of native background. Then, too, this book was written for the family, to keep fresh the memory of the father. It is perhaps beside the point to wonder what it could have been, in the hands of a greater artist.

Let me not decry John Brodie's gifts. Technically his work is good, the characterization vivid, backed by a wry humour. As a person he showed great courage in the face of illness and disability,

was warm and human. Why, then, does his work lack depth, so that the characters in his novels are like puppets, or paper cut-outs lacking a third dimension? Why does the humour degenerate sometimes to flippancy, to the point of offensiveness? His father's funeral is described with feeling, and insight led him to drop the dead man's pipe into the grave. Why, then, remark afterwards: 'It was the first time father had been anywhere without taking a return ticket.'

John Brodie's lack of 'acceptance' explains perhaps the shallowness of his vision. One feels it even in the portrait of his father. Of all the people he has written about his mother stands out most clearly, stealing the show with ease, because she has been drawn with love and understanding.

What blocked a deeper portrayal of his fellow men? A theme runs through his work that gives an answer. The theme is that of laughter. Not laughing with, or even laughing at, but laughing it off, even some still rankling memories of his father. In *Paradise Bay* occurs this passage:

> At this age, for I am only fifteen, I do not yet know this is his [the tui's] commentary, his summing-up, that a man's whole life is to be like this, the search for perfection and the finding of it and then to know it was not so, that there is nothing, absolutely nothing quite perfect, and that when one finds it one must enjoy it and weep and then laugh and fly off.

*Me and Gus* we take for what it is. This honest humour has its own artistic integrity. From the work of John Brodie we look for something deeper. We feel he wished to be taken seriously. Humanity is potentially there, betrayed by a false premise.

'When father died', he writes, 'we decided there was only one way in which we could keep him alive on earth. This was by talking of him and laughing about him and using his quaint expressions all the time. Though my mother's heart was heavy with grief, she did not hesitate to join in this game, which was played with a sort of savage gaiety. Savage, I suppose, because we instinctively knew we must be ruthless in treading down our pain at losing him.'

To laugh it off is to avoid the issue. To tread down pain instead of facing it, and allowing it expression, is immature. An immaturity of outlook prevented, and death ended, the growth of an artist.

*Ruth France*

CANADIAN JOURNAL. Alfred Domett. Edited by E. A. Horsman and Lillian Rea Benson. *London, Canada, The University of Western Ontario.* 5s.

IN 1833, Alfred Domett was twenty-two years old, not very long down from Cambridge, and had just published a volume of poems. He belonged to a family of travellers, he had as yet no settled occupation, he was no doubt disappointed by the cool reception of his book—whatever the reason, he set out in that year for Canada. He travelled with no notion of becoming a settler, as was the case nine years later when he left England for New Zealand, and during his stay in Canada, which lasted the best part of a year, he kept a journal. This journal has now been published for the first time.

The preface suggests two reasons why it may appeal to the reader. It is the work of the friend of Robert Browning, and it is a distinctive contribution to Canadian travel literature. The New Zealand reader, though naturally less interested than the Canadian in the geographical detail, will yet be entertained by glimpses of a colonial society, and by recognizing in the friend of Robert Browning that still familiar figure, the upper middle-class Englishman in the colonies.

There is much in the landscape that we seem to know. There are the fields more or less cleared, generally with burnt blackened stumps of trees sticking up through the corn; the hotel which, with its two long verandahs one above the other, its numerous blinded windows and nearby row of poplars wore quite a Venetian or tropical appearance; the English settler's wife who complains of the want of society, the neighbours being mostly from the States; and the 'shanty', the temporary dwelling of an acquaintance, which is the rudest kind of log hut—'the roof slants one way only, like a pig-sty's'. Poor Domett too we seem to know. He finds little to please him among the Canadians (though this opinion is diametrically opposed to that of the Canadian editor, who says that a spirit of light-heartedness and enjoyment pervades the whole journal). He is genuinely enthusiastic only about natural beauty, the brilliance of autumn leaves and the splendour of Niagara Falls; about outdoor activities, like shooting birds or chopping down trees; and about members of those very few families in which 'the decanter, cups, saucers and the rest of the table apparatus were such as gentlemen use in England'. Too young to be adaptable, he travels among colonists with a deliberate disregard of any but their most superficial qualities.

> How they acquire their money or in what way they spend it, their business or amusement, their degrees of ignorance or knowledge, their thoughts and feelings, their tastes and dislikes, the number and variety of their comforts and luxuries and how

> they acquire them, the furniture in short of their bodies and minds—on all these subjects I have acquired little information. I cannot describe the different orders of their society, nor how they stand affected one to the other. I know nothing about their peculiarities as a nation or their relations with foreign countries.

This being so, he can of course tell us little about them. Complacent, stand-offish, humourless (though sometimes facetious) and bored, he has nothing but contempt for 'Yankees' and for the ordinary Canadian. Even when unreservedly praising Squire Hatch, in whose family he spent some time, and mentioning the sweetness, natural kindness and voluntary politeness of Hatch's daughters, he marks his own condescension by adding, 'Of course we behave to them as if they were in every respect equals'.

The serious importance of the journal is therefore its contribution to our knowledge of Domett's character. We may be amused by the self-portrait of yet another Englishman, stiffly self-conscious, unsparingly critical of his colonial environment; but there is tragedy here too. For here already we see the man, able, ambitious, inflexible and not very likeable, whose later journal reveals his failure to achieve his cherished hopes of fame and friendship. The Canadian reader will of course gain much more from this early work, but there is plenty in it to interest the New Zealander too.

*Margaret Dalziel*

IMPERIAL FEDERATION. A Study of New Zealand Policy and Opinion, 1880-1914. Keith Sinclair. Commonwealth Papers II. *University of London: The Athlone Press.* 4s. 6d.

THE transformation of the second British Empire into the Commonwealth must on any reckoning count as one of the supremely great political achievements of the Western world. It is an achievement, moreover, that stands as a monumental commentary upon the ineptness of many of the political ideologies of this intensely ideological century. As circumspectly described in the Balfour Declaration, and reticently defined in the Statute of Westminster, the Commonwealth represents a political reality neither foreseen nor planned by the elder statesmen of an earlier generation who were understandably concerned about the Empire's future. The elder statesmen concerned themselves with more plausible and clear-cut projects, though from the comfortable perspective that opens to hindsight it is hard to understand why the idea of an Imperial Council, and, more particularly, Imperial Federation, should ever have seemed more than pipe-dreams.

Dr Sinclair is concerned to revalue the role played by New

Zealand in promoting the cause of Imperial Federation. Hitherto it seems to have been generally thought that New Zealanders consolidated their claims to be considered the most exuberantly loyal of the Motherland's ocean-scattered children by the ardour with which they bespoke the cause of Imperial Federation, in contrast to less filial Canadians and Australians who were more concerned with their own political independence. Dr Sinclair has two comments to make on this view. First, he argues that New Zealand constituents, together with the bulk of their political representatives, viewed the prospect of Imperial Federation with lethargic indifference. True, many outstanding political men, including Seddon and Pember Reeves, supported the idea in their different ways; but they were leaders without any army. Dr Sinclair, incidentally, traces the failure of the Imperial Federation movement to this lack of popular support, here and elsewhere; but, given all the popular support imaginable, one suspects that economic, geographic, and political considerations of various sorts would always prevent Imperial Federation from becoming more than a sentiment.

What, then, accounts for Seddon's strenuous defence of Imperial Federation at the 1897 Imperial Conference? This raises Dr Sinclair's second point. He suggests that Seddon, and New Zealand supporters of Federation generally, were no less concerned with colonial independence than were the Canadian and Australian opponents of Federation. But, unlike most of them, Seddon saw the impracticability of separate navies, and knew that his country's security depended on the British navy. He therefore supported Imperial Federation because he believed that this offered the best way of strengthening New Zealand's voice in the determination of imperial foreign policy. All, on this view, were equally concerned to keep the maternal hand at a decent distance; but whereas Seddon thought this could best be done in and through a federal organization, the others feared that this in reality would strengthen rather than subdue the hand. Then, as now, politicians wrestled with the hard fact that a country cannot enjoy the luxury of national independence, together with an autonomous foreign policy, unless that country has the man-power and resources to enforce them.

Whether Seddon advocated Imperial Federation mainly for the reason given, or whether the emphasis should more properly fall on his appreciation of the London publicity and popularity which his advocacy brought him, is a question which readers of Dr Sinclair's interesting study must decide for themselves. His paper covers an important aspect of New Zealand history, and one which, to the best of my knowledge, is not systematically dealt with elsewhere.

*E. A. Olssen*

THE LANDFALLS OF ODYSSEUS. Clue and Detection in *The Odyssey*. L. G. Pocock. *Published for the author by Whitcombe and Tombs, Christchurch.* 3s. 6d.

AMONG the curiosities of the Homeric controversy is Samuel Butler's theory that the *Odyssey* was composed, not by a blind old man living in rocky Chios or some other Ionian city, but by a princess of Drepanum, the modern Trapani in Western Sicily. Butler's mistakes are such (his theory rests largely upon the belief that Homer knew less than Butler about Homeric Greece) that his work has hitherto been neglected by serious scholars. But

Errors like straws upon the surface flow;
Who seeks for pearls must plumb the depths below,

and it is fitting that the first pearl-diving expedition should have been conducted by a Professor of Canterbury University College.

Professor Pocock, after himself visiting Western Sicily, concludes that Trapani is indeed Scheria, the home of the Phaeacians whose magic ship conveyed Odysseus home. He then proceeds to consider other points of Odyssean geography. His remarks on Scylla and Charybdis (pp. 11-13) offer a solution to a problem usually neglected—the repeated mentions of 'fire', 'smoke' and 'dark clouds' in connection with these monsters.

That the poet of the *Odyssey* had considerable (but perhaps second-hand) knowledge of Sicilian waters may be conceded, and is historically probable if as modern criticism suggests, the poem was composed in the seventh century B.C. But the present reviewer will never be persuaded that the Ithaca of Odysseus was not the island which has been called Ithaca throughout recorded history.

Professor Pocock has unfortunately only found space to state in outline a case for which the full evidence must be presented elsewhere. The omission of most of Ibn Jubayr's charming description of mediaeval Trapani is particularly to be regretted (p.4) and the modern legend of the stone ship of Malconsiglio (pp.3-4 and Pl. II) would have borne repetition. A few detailed criticisms may be allowed. P. 4 section 2. 'Sixth century B.C.'. The story of the Cyclops had 'achieved publicity' in Attica and the Argolid by c. 650 B.C. Pp. 9-10 section 12. The White Rock. Book xxiv has been regarded by most critics, ancient and modern, as a late addition. P. 10. Osteodes. The story told in Diodorus V, 11 probably belongs to a much later period than the *Odyssey*. P. 15 section 20. We may allow the possibility that the poet knew Trapani without supposing that he actually lived there, or that he was unfamiliar with the Eastern Mediterranean. The existence of a Greek-speaking community in Western Sicily in the seventh century B.C. wants confirmation.

*J. K. Anderson*

CHRISTIANITY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE. Six Lectures. Harold Mattingly. *Dunedin, University of Otago.* 7s. 6d.

DR MATTINGLY was until his retirement Keeper of the Roman coins in the British Museum; the subject of these lectures is usually regarded as the domain of the church historian. The author is, therefore, approaching his subject not as an expert but as a 'dilettante', and he does so in the best British tradition, producing a work full of delight to the reader.

The first two lectures deal with the political and religious environment of the Church in the Roman Empire, the remaining lectures relate the story of the expansion of Christianity, the ensuing struggle between Church and State, and the ultimate victory of the Christian religion. But these lectures never remain a mere collation of facts; Dr Mattingly's lively mind is always at play on the material which he presents. His stimulating asides, observations, and questions invite the reader to follow the author's example.

One of Dr Mattingly's asides hits right into the centre of contemporary theological discussion. When dealing with the polytheism of the Roman world he ventures the suggestion that polytheism is 'admirably suited to art and poetry' and expresses the feeling that we may have gone too far in the process of 'depersonalizing' our religious vocabulary. One is here immediately reminded of Bultmann's contrary plea for 'demythologizing' the Christian vocabulary and the passionate controversy over the translation of mythological speech into non-mythological terms which it incited. The Christian religion has undoubtedly a natural tendency towards 'demythologizing', and the modern age of technology probably owes more to this tendency in the Christian religion than to the revival of the classical antique in the Renaissance, and who would seriously wish to return, after this deliverance of the human mind, to an age of 'principalities and powers', even if it were for the sake of art and beauty!

There are also a number of factual statements in the book, which the reviewer finds it difficult to accept. The followers of Plotinus are referred to as Neo-Pythagoreans instead of Neo-Platonists. With Neo-Pythagoreanism we associate a name like Apollonius of Tyana, the sage and miracle worker at the close of the first century, and, with certain qualifications, that of Plutarch.

Marcion, the great heretic of the second century, is called a 'gnostic'. This he was most emphatically not. Gnosticism is a dualistic and speculative theosophy which has its main springs in a strong aversion to the whole natural cosmos and in its desire to help the human spirit return to its divine origin by way of 'gnosis' (the Greek word for knowledge) concerning the world of principalities and powers through the dominions of which the human soul must venture its hazardous journey home. Marcion shares the

dualism with the gnostics, but not every dualist is a gnostic. Otherwise, he is an extreme follower of St Paul who relies for his salvation on faith and not on knowledge.

Further, the credal formulations of the Church, accelerated as the process of their production was by the Church's conflict with the heretics, above all Marcion and the gnostics, do not primarily owe their origin to this conflict. They have rather their seat in the life of the Church itself, in its catechetical instruction, the liturgy, and quite generally in the tendency of human societies to evolve symbols on which the adherents can fix their loyalties.

The statement, made in connection with Constantine's baptism prior only to his death, that 'sins after baptism were judged too heinous to be washed out by anything but the blood of martyrdom' ignores the growth of the institution of penance which was evolved by the Church precisely to deal with the matter of sins committed after baptism. By the time Constantine was baptized, even such mortal sins as fornication, apostasy and murder no longer debarred the penitent sinner for ever from the communion of the Church.

*H. H. Rex*

# CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor

Sir: Thank you for your stimulating editorial on the teaching of English in this country. May I express vigorous disagreement with nearly everything you say? To clarify the issue, I summarize your thesis. You write—

That New Zealand children leave school 'crippled for life by an inadequate command of their own language', 'ignorant of grammar and of common English idiom, deprived of literature because they do not understand words.

That they also therefore fail to understand the world they live in, either its technical procedures or its emotional pressures. In particular, as an example, you suggest that the country did not think clearly during 'the late uproar about juvenile immorality, 'largely because the teaching of English in our schools does not train children to use words responsibly. . . .'

As proof of your statements, you indicate the poor quality of the writing and speaking of University students, teachers, and professional men in commerce, arts and science.

You say that unless children are taught the English language 'as a formal subject' they will never be masters of it.

Finally, you say that one reason for the failure of the schools is the limited range of textbooks used, many of them books of extracts, which 'are the principal class reading up to and including the Fifth forms'; that such study of extracts 'does nothing to fit children for a world in which they will be confronted with . . . vast terrifying struggles and pressures and with powers that appear to be beyond human comprehension and control'.

Sir, I hope I have represented your arguments justly. Now to disagree. First, and least important, you assume that only 'formal study' (do you mean grammar?) can develop the correct use of English. This is a matter still in dispute, still undecided.

Second, these 'crippled' children. You say that students and professional men here often write deplorably; I agree; so they do overseas, notably in the social and administrative studies originating in the United States. The English language is a fine precision instrument. Mastery of it is very rare. Imperfect control of it among the ruck of men who must in these days write and speak in public is not new, in New Zealand or elsewhere. If some—not fewer than before—have clear heads and crisp pens, it is all we can expect.

Third. Do you seriously maintain that this country's idiotic reaction when Teen-age Sex reared its Ugly Head recently is to be blamed on today's teachers of English? Those who made the uproar were parents and others, aged thirty-five or more. They were born in 1920 at the latest, and educated in the Good Old Days. Also, surely such a violent catharsis as this affair provoked in our community has causes more profound than mere linguistic ineptitude?

Extracts, now, and textbooks. How thorough was your investigation? I believe you have been both misinformed, and half-informed. I do not know any State school where 'a limited range of textbooks' is 'the principal class reading'. Most authorities, for obvious reasons of economy, limit the number of books which pupils or school must buy. All, in addition, specify full-length books of varied types, for reading and class discussion. These books are made available to schools in quantity and quality far surpassing the standards of, say, 1940. They reach the children through the schools' own library stock, the loan sets of the School Library Service, the reference material available from that Service to teachers, and the greatly increased Public Library services of the country. You will not, of course, find all these indicated on the Departmental List which seems to you to be imposing 'set books'. That List, moreover, is permissive, not mandatory; deviations from it are always possible on request and after consultation.

Extracts. Fifth form children are on an average aged 15-16; they have four hours to spend a week in English class work. Some time goes in that very analysis of words and passages which you ask for to 'train children to use words responsibly themselves, and to

ask what other people mean by them'. Some is spent in handling 'complete works'. You ask school teachers to 'train the mind and imagination' of children, to give them a 'sense of growth, of the processes of history, of structure, of architectonic', to fit them 'for a world in which they will be confronted, not with carefully chosen and labelled problems, but with vast terrifying struggles and pressures and with powers that appear to be beyond human comprehension and control'. Granted that the world which present-day children must face is a terrifying one. Can the schools do more than provide a balanced diet of some extracts studied intensively, combined with some full reading, covering imaginative and technical matters within the child's grasp? This most schools attempt, though none of us is perfect.

Finally, credentials. I have spent five years or more as each of these—New Zealand school pupil, student, teacher, Training College lecturer, Examiner, University lecturer. I know that many of my present colleagues are 'constant cryers' about the shortcomings of students. To this chorus I personally would add only the mildest of croaks. I believe that the University today gets what it has always had in this country, students ranging in ability from A to M or N. They come to be taught. If the result is not all we could wish—and when has it ever been? it won't do just to blame the schools. Contemporary ways of living, widespread social trends, possible personal inadequacies, are at least as responsible.

Your editorial put two matters before us. You lamented that New Zealanders do not use the language well, as may be seen in our writing, heard in our speaking. I agree, and we should mend our ways, as far as we can. You find the cause of our insufficiencies to lie in certain practices in our schools. I disagree.

Much of what you allege is, I believe, only partly true, and not typical. Even if all were as you say, the school teaching of English is only one factor in a very complex situation.

*Joan Stevens*
*Victoria University College*

## NEW CONTRIBUTORS

*J. K. Anderson.* Born in India in 1924. Educated at Trinity College, Glenalmond, and Christ Church, Oxford. After three years study at the British School of Archaeology at Athens was appointed Lecturer in Classics at the University of Otago in 1953. Has published a Handbook to the Greek Vases in the Otago Museum.

*Roy Cowan.* Born 1918 in Wellington and educated there; son of the author James Cowan. Teacher and artist; in 1953 received the Travelling Scholarship in Art of the Association of N.Z. Art Societies and went to study at the Slade, etc. Assistant Art Editor, Department of Education, since 1949. Has exhibited in Wellington and with The Group in Christchurch.

*Arthur Sewell.* Professor of English, Auckland University College, 1934-46. Now Professor of English, University of Ankara, Turkey. Author of *Katherine Mansfield, a critical essay; A Study in Milton's Christian Doctrine; Character and Society in Shakespeare.*

*F. J. West.* Born in East Yorkshire 1927. Read history at the University of Leeds; Rouse Ball Research Student of Trinity College, Cambridge, where he also taught history. In 1952 turned from mediaeval studies to Pacific history, especially New Guinea. Fellow of the Australian National University, Canberra. Came to New Zealand in 1955 as Senior Lecturer in History at Victoria University College. Has published papers in journals in various countries.

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

*The Journals of Captain James Cook.* Edited by J. C. Beaglehole. For the Hakluyt Society. Cambridge. Vol. I £4. Portfolio of Charts and Views £2. 10.

*Waiting for Godot.* Samuel Beckett. Faber & Faber. 9s. 6d.

*An Anthology of New Zealand Verse.* Selected by Robert Chapman and Jonathan Bennett. Oxford. 21s.

*Walter de la Mare.* A selection from his writings made by Kenneth Hopkins. Faber & Faber. 18s.

*Max Weber and German Politics.* J. P. Mayer. Second edition. Faber & Faber. 12s. 6d.

*Experimental Sonnets.* Merrill Moore. The Pegasus Press. 5s.

*One Foot in Eden.* Edwin Muir. Faber & Faber. 10s. 6d.

*Saga and Myth in Ancient Ireland.* Gerard Murphy. Irish Life and Culture X. Colm O Lochlainn, Dublin: at the Sign of the Three Candles. 2s.

*Armed Settlers.* The Story of the Founding of Hamilton, 1864-74. H. C. M. Norris. Paul's Book Arcade. 15s.

*The Birdsville Track and other poems.* Douglas Stewart. Angus & Robertson. 15s.

*Liberty in Australia.* Edited by John Wilkes. Australian Institute of Political Science. Angus & Robertson. 16s.

*The Rationalist Annual,* 1956. Edited by Hector Hawton. Watts & Co. 3s. 6d.

*Antonin Dvorák.* Olga Humlová. Prague, Orbis. 1954.

*Shakespeare in Czechoslovakia.* Jaroslav Pokorny. Prague, Orbis. 1955.

*Czechoslovak Films.* Jan Soukup. Prague, Orbis. 1955.

*The Puppet Theatre in Czechoslovakia.* Prague, Orbis. 1955. (These four by courtesy of the Consulate-General of the Czechoslovak Republic, Wellington.)

# *Notes*

Two of the reports in this number from members of the cultural group who visited China in April and May refer to the impact of the doctrine of socialist realism on the most ancient and longest civilized of all living societies. Although Mao Tse-tung's 'Talks at the Yenan Forum on Art and Literature' are dated 1942 (see his *Selected Works*, Vol. IV), it is still Chinese policy, in his words, 'to fit art and literature properly into the whole revolutionary machine as one of its component parts', because 'art and literature are subordinate to politics, but they in turn also exert a great influence on politics'. The doctrine of socialist realism is in China, as it has been in Russia, a political weapon on the 'cultural front', part of the apologetics of a barely established revolutionary régime still fighting for its life.

In the West, such a doctrine must survive on its merits, if any; it may then be able to draw attention to a neglected aspect of the arts. But when expounded by the state as infallible dogma and rigidly applied, it contradicts common sense, the nature of man in a complex society, and all the liberating, forward-looking aims of revolutions like the Russian and the Chinese: it is thoroughly reactionary: it smells of the Index. The arts are so abundantly various that they cannot be forced into a single narrow mould: in attempting to impose socialist realism on literature and music, the Russians almost killed them. For the arts, like the sciences, lose their virtue when they are denied freedom; the artist, like the scientist, must follow where truth and the argument lead him. Truth indeed is apt to be unpalatable, and argument often leads to dangerous-sounding conclusions. But an exposed, 'open' society retains its vigour only by entertaining unpalatable truths and dangerous conclusions, in a process of constant self-renewal: if it plays safe and resorts to continued repression it will gradually dry up from within, even though outwardly it may seem for a time to achieve some of its aims. Every society *wants* to see itself in the light of the imaginative truth which works of art inexplicably capture and embody. This is one of the deepest social needs, which the kind of earnest propagandist journalistic works that are so freely concocted to the recipes of socialist realism do not answer, as the

Russians are discovering. Intellectuals, it may be, can be 'remoulded', under pressure; but works of art cannot be faked: they won't appear on demand, and you can't make five-year plans for them: neither promise nor threat will bring them to birth. They arise in their own time, when the air is sufficiently free: they are a gift, a grace added to society, not an article it can indent for or manufacture at will. Half their power lies in their freshness and unexpectedness. What 'products of their time' were more improbable, before they appeared, or are more unrepresentative, on any sober view of the matter, than, say, *Hamlet* or *The Marriage of Figaro, Don Juan* or *Pickwick Papers* or *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu, The Twelve* or *Guernica?* It is the ephemeral works, those which are of and for the moment only, those made to a recipe, that are representative (if the word has any meaning in this connexion), and that might well be predicted. The artist is in the true sense a discoverer and a creator, not a cheer-leader or interpreter or popularizer of political and social doctrine, nor apologist for any established order. He is the herald, the bringer of news: and a people to whom no news comes, no enlarging, imaginative news, will soon grow bored and stale, though it may not know why.

Boredom and staleness have been marked enough in New Zealand for a long time past; they are being noticed increasingly in England too. Social timidity and consequent pressures to conform, in both countries, as they operate constantly on artists, writers, thinkers and everyone of independent mind, have the kind of stifling effect that the imposition of dogmas like socialist realism brings about elsewhere, though to a lesser degree. For the pressures can be resisted: it is possible for individuals to speak out, to express ideas new and old, and restate those 'dangerous thoughts' which are the life-blood of religions and civilizations, as they are the inspiration of many great works of art. But the public forum in which ideas would have the greatest effect, by blowing large gusts of fresh air into the stale social climate, that is, broadcasting, is not open for free discussion, which we are too timid to allow. See Mr Constable's remarks elsewhere in this issue.

Like ideas, works of art do not 'serve' the state: they are not 'useful' to society: yet society cannot live and breathe without them. It depends on their invigorating breath and their potent suggestion for its own necessary self-understanding, and for an expression of the unappeasable human fear and hope and doubt and trust which underlie every social system better or worse.

* * *

In his 'Contemporary Music in New Zealand' in the June number of *Landfall* Frederick Page stated that Edwin Carr's *Mardi Gras* overture had not been played in this country. Mr Page wrote in April; while *Landfall* was in the press, the overture was played at the Auckland Festival by the National Orchestra under James Robertson, on Saturday 26 May, in a concert which was broadcast the following night by the main national stations of the N.Z.B.S.

* * *

The judges in *Landfall's* Prose Award, entries for which close on 30 November, will be Margaret Dalziel and Charles Brasch.

C. K. STEAD

# *Poems in Afterthought*

*Man is in love and loves what vanishes.* Yeats

## I

### ALMORA

He walks where they have spent
Warm nights, branches overbent
And street-lights drumming. And now
The rain falls on him, leaves flow
To choke deep drains, and over
Rain-blackened rocks like a lover
The ivy sprawls. Green to brown
To puddled slush, and down
The streaked air slide the lights of cars.
This street, house: memory jars
To know her gone, nor even wanted,—
She, nonchalant, who sauntered
Through hectic dreams. Not loss
But death, like the bones of trees
Above this thudding rain.
They may not keep even their pain.

II

## WAITEMATA

SHE sighs, is silent, etched a moment
On the moon-graced sea, eyes shut to sense,
Sudden, firm-set intransigence
Becalmed on hopelessness, all love spent.

And becomes for him that past dream of death,
Pursued, lost, pleaded with, who turned away
Strewing a moon-wake of promises over the sea;
Whose yield remains in mind, desire and myth.

'It is you' he breathes, love out of the past
Swiftly reborn; eyes lift to his, smile
Into sight, sensing his change of will.
Life flames in her, in him withers to dust.

She waits. 'It is difficult' he mumbles,
'To love without obstacle, to desire when loved.'
She turns again, her dream reproved:
Over her tongue the name Death quietly stumbles.

III

## REMUERA

Now she owns golden things,
But never those their dreams
Had made for her: Fate schemes,
Bestows on her these rings,
Rich clothes, a second child;
Time was his thoughts grew wild
Only to touch her hair—
Loss was the fear.

Many possible ways
His guess has seen,
But never this, her fine
Bourgeois livery
And a steady man:
Yet once his mind ran
Knife-edged to know another
Wanting her.

She was to triumph over
Art and the world, as men;
But that image shifts again—
Domestic her last lover,
And a brood to tend:
Time was her touch could lend
Golden words to his name,
Forged of flame.

And he?—he owned no thought
Past immediate need,
Running always to feed
The fears that brought
Words like bright rings:
And running still, now sings
Of another's touch, new fear,
And her rich, dark hair.

## IV

## ARMIDALE

In wind they walk above the town, the grey
Clouds low racing, and in a high house
Shutters that bang beyond a ruined gate;
All overgrown there under birch and elm
Yellowing, looking out on the valleyed town.

And here they turn, finding a stony road
Dipping through gums—the borrowed trees
And buildings of the town lost to their eyes.
Sun tumbles between ridges, and loud
Night noise conspires with wind in tree and grass.

'Quick' come the voices, 'kill and overgrow.'
She leans to him along the rutted path,
Shadowy now, hearing the magpie drop
Malicious notes, round stones in a deep well.
A tree-frog buzzes like a broken wire.

'You are afraid then?' But no answer comes,
While every darker moment adds more legs
Scraping above those shiny backs, more throats
Blown up unseen into a glottal threat.
'Afraid?' 'Where?' But all is dark. He is alone

JAMES K. BAXTER

# *Jack Winter's Dream*

NOTE

THIS play was written for the speaking and the singing voice, and for radio. I had in mind a form midway between the campfire or bar room yarn and the objectified drama of the stage. The debt to Dylan Thomas is obvious enough; less obvious, but equally real, is the debt owing to my father for many fertile conversations on every subject from alluvial gold mining to demonology. Is the play meant to be historically real? God forbid. But there is one notion that lies behind the play, and in a sense accounts for it: that the shedding of blood christens a place, makes it part of the soul and imagination of man; that the natural world shares in our guilt, agony and perhaps redemption.

NARRATOR. Look and listen. A star falls from the roof of the sky. A wind is beginning in the thick bush of the night. (*Noise of gently rising wind*)

It blows in Abelstown, quiet as a miner's ghost, sifting the shingle dust of the street for fool's gold. It wheedles under the door of the shut Bank. It bangs like a drunk dead miner on the spidered panes of the long-dry dusty pubs where only the dark drinks now. It dances like a high-heeled whisky Jane on the gapped floor of a shanty, puffing and smiling in whalebone and a feathered hat, while the hot dead whistle for more. It shuffles in flat slippers among graves and pines on the island of earth left by the glassy shovels and the swivel gunning hoses. And the Chinamen in exile there, lying down light and lank under a clay quilt, hear it ruffle above them like the swaggering bandit waves between them and China. They hug hard their wives of gold to their bony chests. Under the sailing moon Abelstown is full of the empty dead. But no blood runs, except in the willow veins, and the cold water race that sighs all night like a naked girl under the old moon's eye, twisting and turning on a mattress of wet stones and needles. (*Rattle of stones*)

What did you hear then? The morepork, with blood on its claw, hooting? A rabbit screeching, with blood on its fur, as the weasel slashes and sucks? (*Slow footsteps*)

No. Stoat and owl run to their holes. The dead hide under God's hand. A man is climbing the hill of the night, out of dry Abelstown. He sings as he stumbles and climbs. (*Voice singing*)

JACK WINTER. I can tell where cherries grow
By the dry Cardrona,
Where I plucked them long ago
On a day when I was sober.

My father wore a parson's coat
By the dry Cardrona;
He kept a tally of the sheep and the goats,
And I was never sober.

My mother sewed her Sunday skirt
By the dry Cardrona,
They said she died of a broken heart
For I was never sober.

O lay my bones till the judgement crack
By the wild Cardrona!
The blanket swag upon my back
Will pillow me drunk or sober.

I loved a girl and only one
By the dry Cardrona:
She up and married the banker's son
For I was never sober.

I courted a widow of forty-nine
By the dry Cardrona,
She owned a stable and a scheelite mine
But I was never sober.

All rivers run to the rimless grave,
Even the wild Cardrona,
And never a one will look my way
When I am bone cold sober.

But I have seen the cherries grow
By the wild Cardrona,
Where I plucked them long ago
One day when I was sober.

NARRATOR. Who is singing on the night road when only the scared owls can hear him? It is Jack Winter, rabbiter, swagman and station rouseabout. Sixty-eight convictions for being happy in a public place. Jailed under the Dog Act he must wear a terrier's

collar till the day Death takes it off. Twin brother to the Ephesian sleepers, he has forgotten the world of manhours and ordered mischief, wishes, agonies, hot love and cold pillows, plaster gnomes and paper doilies, for a lifelong dream in which he is winter walking Adam, and the green, gay, hole-and-corner, rabbit-footed, duck-blooded, river-voiced, bush-thighed and mountain-breasted Earth his care and his sole kingdom. Bread, lean mutton, tea and tobacco, snooze in his swag with a bottle of Brandivino, a black billy in newspaper, a cure for haemorrhoids and an astrological work called *The Secrets of the Pyramids*. His heart plods in his breast as he climbs the winding, windy, endless road among broom islands, old Jonah alone and alive in the whale's-belly night. (*Coughing*)

The thin air takes him by the throat. And the sweet, sly bottle talks turkey to him out of his swag. It sings in his ear like a wasp.

BOTTLE (*in a high lady voice*). Are you there, Jack?

JACK. Where else would I be, dear? (*Coughs*)

BOTTLE. Ah, your poor throat!

JACK. A lot you care.

BOTTLE. Yes, I do. I'll be your Sunday wife. I'll make a bed of goose feathers, heavy as snow on the ground, and we'll creep in together. I'll kiss you to sleep like a bad, old mother. I'll hold you closer than your bones.

JACK. And you won't nag when you're empty?

BOTTLE. Not this time.

JACK. Don't pester me.

BOTTLE. What about Gurney, the john at Clyde?

JACK. He likes to use his boots.

BOTTLE. What about Mulligan, owns the Tarras pub?

JACK. He did me out of a gallon.

BOTTLE. What about Ginger Jervis?

JACK. He's dead now. Buried in a board coffin. He'd pocket the brass handles and sell them for a nip to keep the frost out. But they're all men, sweetheart. There's no sense in being angry.

BOTTLE (*softly*). Jack, do you love me?

JACK. More than gooseberry fool. More than a Christmas candle. More than mutton and gravy. More than tomorrow. More than a potato nugget. More than a church full of windows. I love you better than John Winter.

BOTTLE (*very slowly*). Do you want me more than Heaven?

NARRATOR. says the brown, fat bottle sugared with sleep.

JACK (*very slowly*). I don't know.

BOTTLE. Drink me, lover! (*Sound of drinking*)

NARRATOR. Behind the ice hedge of a moustache flesh mouth and glass mouth meet snugly, swapping spits in the dark. And in the great grave of the sky a cloud walks, like a spider, over the face of the moon. Abelstown goes down like a raft in the long Pacific seas of the night. Old Jack is a drowned man walking, his blood heavy with lost sea gardens, fable of coin and shell, and the weedy seagirl voices beckoning him to the blind rock of sleep. He stops where the road forks. To the left it sprawls into a riverbed and bellows for help on the greasy stones. To the right runs a one-time bullock track; and there, under green innocence of broom and elder, smoulder the twice-dead ruins of *The Drover's Rest*, a roadside shanty pub some time ago vacated by its late owner, Mr Charles Bird, known to the dead drovers as Webfoot Charlie for his duck's waddle and his grip on a gold half-sovereign. But wrists of broom heave now at the sundried slabs of clay. By the fireplace hang winy clusters of berries. At the verge of the inner room, under an elder bush, where a piece of roof still stops the sky from looking in, Jack Winter unrolls his swag by starlight. The smiling dead host welcomes him. He stretches out. And falls like a spinning stone into the dooms and dreams and fiery sabbath of the eighty-years-undead. (*Noise of wind rising*)

The wind rises, savaging stone and star, as if to blow the night away, and the guilt of man's dominion from the God made earth. But listen. Look. The past is turning its drowned face towards us. The clay crumbed floor is smooth and hard again. By the smoke-black wall stands a clock, ticking the dead time away. Barrel and bench sag cosy by a fire of crackling thorns. Air, earth and water are made again in the shape of manflesh. A true ghost is knocking at the horn gates of a dream. (*Loud knocking*)

WILL TREVELYAN. Open up, for God's sake!

PREACHING LOWRY. Bring oot a light, Charlie, there's a soul in the dark needs help. It's nae time for man or bairn to be walking.

WEBFOOT CHARLIE. Easy, easy. The wall's not made of iron. (*Noise of unbolting*)

LOWRY. Ah, puir man, he's a' mucky with sweat!

CHARLIE. Shut your mouth, Lowry! (*Pause*)

What's your name? It's late to be knocking at honest men's houses. Are you from the Dunstan? There's many queer folk abroad.

TREVELYAN. I'm Will Trevelyan, son of Ned Trevelyan, and a better man never stepped in two shoes. And you're Webfoot Charlie. They say you'd skin a day-old calf and sell the blood for a pudding.

LOWRY. Whisht now! In the Lord's sight nae man is justified. Dinna be sae quick. Come in ben now. You're a guid lad for a' that. Trevelyan is Cornish. Is it lang ye've been at the diggings?

TREVELYAN. Three months by Easter, and that's too long for me. Bags of mouldy flour weighed out for gold dust. Whisky in a rusty pan. A beard full of lice and rain coming through the canvas. Wet and dry, the grey rock and the wind in the tussocks. A thousand brutes in moleskin, digging for the yellow dirt. Only brutes don't eat each other. That's the Dunstan.

LOWRY. Aye, lad, but the Lord preserves the simple. So ye've come away a wee bit poorer but nae harm done.

TREVELYAN. Poorer? I've come out of it with a thousand pounds in dust and nuggets. It's all in the saddlebags, out by the creek there. The hack's stone dead. He broke his leg at the ford, among the boulders, and drowned in the damned slimy creek. A game brute he was, and kinder than a man. I woke up with my head out of water. So I untied the girth and pulled the saddle off him. It's still there, lying where I left it. Then I saw the light at the window and came this way.

CHARLIE. Eh, time enough to get the gold in the morning. Come in by the fire. You'll be wet from the creek still. You've heard a bad tale of me, lad, but Charlie Bird's like a ripe nut, with spikes outside and a good heart underneath. We're glad enough of company on a wicked night. It was Preaching Lowry let you in. (*Softly*) He's a bit touched. Mad when the worm bites, but no fool either. He knows a florin from a crown. And over in the corner, that's the Dane. Nobody's ever heard his right name. A devil when he's drunk. He was a captain before he killed a man. He can play the fiddle to beat all comers. And this is Ballarat Jake.

BALLARAT JAKE. Glad to meet you, son. It's a tough little island.

CHARLIE. You'll not be seeing my daughter Jenny. She's asleep in her bed above. A young maid shouldn't hear what men say over a glass. Ah, she's a flower! and her mother dead these five years. (*Sighs*) I'm father and mother to her now.

TREVELYAN. It must be lonely for a child in these parts.

CHARLIE. Ah, she's not a child quite. We're each other's company. She's busy about the house all day, singing like a bird on the wall. I could sing myself when I had a voice. But sit down, lad, I'm forgetting your comfort. You'll have a glass of *aqua vitae?*

TREVELYAN. I'd rather a plate of dry beef and onions.

CHARLIE. You'll have that too. And hot water to wash in. Oh that's a bruise! (*Fade*)

NARRATOR. Kind Charlie strokes the Cornishman's face where the skin is broken. Then walks on sly web feet from table to kitchen and back. Unknown to him, in the thickness that is wall and will be air, Jack Winter groans and rolls from the nightmare padding feet. *(Clatter)*

His empty glass bride clatters on a stone. The dead Cornishman cannot hear it. He knows only what his eyes and fingers tell him. But the dead mad Preacher sees, beyond time, Jack Winter lying under the elder tree, its moondark clusters heavy with sleep. He hears the clenching shudder of root in earth. He sees time past and time to be, and the heart of man a clay image melting on the palm of God's hand. He sees his own coffin . . . .

As Trevelyan washes and eats, and the Preacher looks long at the heart of knowledge, the drunk Dane wakens on his fireside bench. He is tattooed with trees like the gliding Amazon; from one tree a serpent hangs head downward to his navel. He draws from under his moleskin jacket the only voice he owns, the narrow-waisted singing fiddle. And to that strumming Ballarat Jake tells for no reason his sentimental, true, dead love to the listening sabbath dark. *(Voice and strumming fiddle)*

BALLARAT. There was never one to match her,
Lovely Mary Gray,
In her flower of woman's nature:
Death himself was loth to snatch her
From the world away.

She knew all a woman's answers,
My sweet Mary Gray,
And like a bird in the windy branches
Rippled her feet in the calico dances
When her heart was gay.

Bright as a berry her eyes were shining,
My dear Mary Gray,
When the harvest moon was waning.
O her breasts were the land of Canaan
Under a mound of hay.

She told me that she loved me dearly,
Charming Mary Gray.
Her words of love they did deceive me:
With a deep wound my heart was bleeding
On her marriage day.

She lies now beyond all caring,
Lovely Mary Gray,
For she died in long childbearing,
And her lovely ghost is faring
With the wind away.

CHARLIE. Why, now, that's a sad old song. I could do as well myself, if the frog in my throat would let me. And did she leave you at the altar, Jake? They do say a woman's not to be trusted. My own wife was very strange to me, very strange, God rest her where she should be. She loved her *aqua vitae* better than a broom. A great, ugly slummock in skirts she was. They had to break the wall down to carry her out. The door was too narrow for her proud carrion.

LOWRY. Ah man, she was your ain wife!

CHARLIE. Hold your tongue, Lowry. You're an old croaking magpie! (*Softer*) Now, lad, be easy. There's no bad blood between friends. Charlie Bird always speaks his mind. She was a kind old bag, sure enough, and I was sorry to see her go. I'll tell you a secret, lad—I'm not the man I used to be. I could fork to the top of the stack once, aye, all day, and toss a hundred-weight of wheat. But the cold touches me now, just here, by the heart. Old bones are sad bones. You mustn't mind an old man's way. Ah, you're young yet, with many a day to live, and a rich man too. The blood's bright in your face. If I'd had a son he'd be about your age this day. (*Noise of pouring*)

Drink it down, lad; it's better than bog water. I might even sing a song myself. Just a funny wee shanty I heard when I was a boy at sea.

(*Voice only*)

When I was a-strolling in Liverpool Town
I met a young maid with her hair hanging down.
When I asked her the reason for why she did weep
She answered, 'My husband has gone with the Fleet'.
Derry down, down, down derry down.

'He's young and he's handsome, he worshipped my charms,
And often he cuddled me close in his arms.
We loved like two mice in a hole in a cheese,
But now he is tossing upon the wild seas.'

'Can a pretty young widow live long without friends?
O I'll be your husband to make you amends.'
But 'No,' she replied, 'I could never do that,
For I still must be true to my wandering Jack.'

When a maid is a-weeping no gorgon am I—
So I offered my sleeve and her tears were soon dry.
That night I lay rough as a bear in her arms
And in place of her sailor I tasted her charms.

But from her warm pillow I rose with the day,
And I pulled on my boots though she begged me to stay.
I left that young maid with her hair hanging down
And I sailed with the tide out of Liverpool Town.
Derry down, down, down derry down.

BALLARAT. That's a fine song indeed, Mr Bird. It reminds me . . . but that's another tale.

CHARLIE. Tell it, Jake.

BALLARAT. It's not a tale for the Preacher's ear.

CHARLIE. He's no preacher, but a daft, old Scots billygoat! Speak out, man, and let's have it all.

BALLARAT. Well, here's the true tale; and there's a billygoat in this one too. I was working in a claim south of Ballarat, in the sixties. There was three of us in together, myself, and the Dane here, and another sailor like the one in the song: a tyke of a man, a roaring wee Scotsman with a rumbottle nose and a fist like a hammer. Next to his bottle he loved what he called the lasses. Black, white, brown and yellow—he'd been through them all like a boy through a field of hay. And ah! he hated the kirk. He swore that if a parson came within smelling distance of him on his last day, he'd brain him, though always with an empty bottle, for the mountain dew was nae cheap and a parson's heid gey thick. Those were his words. He wouldn't deny there might be a God; but a Devil, no. It was a tale to frighten bairns with . . . .

CHARLIE. And he had the right of it there.

BALLARAT. Maybe. Well, myself and the Dane had put a drive into the hill and we'd timbered it safe and sound. The wee Scotsman—Jimmy Lawson he called himself, though I guess he'd another name at home—he'd been on the spree for a week and never touched a shovel. He'd work like a bullock one day and be dead drunk the next. That was his style. He comes up cocky as a fantail when the work's finished. 'Well, boys,' he says, 'you've done a great job here'—just as if he was the boss taking a look over it—'but I hope you've made her safe. I think I'll just go down and try her.' He'd sobered up that morning, but I could see his hand was shaking.

'Aye, go right on down', I said. Now, there was a goat tied up outside the tent, an old stinking billy with a beard like Satan. He'd

little enough to feed on, except the saltbush and what we gave him of our own tucker. But the Dane wouldn't have him killed. So we brought the old sod up to the mouth of the drive. The Scotsman was down at the bottom.

'There's a place here needs another slab of timber', he sings out.

'Here's a man with the timber', I yell back at him. And I give a twist to the goat's tail and send him off down the drive. And then he sees the billygoat coming, coughing and grunting, with its horns and beard and its eyes like coals in the dark. He takes one look, and down he drops on his knees. I could see his lips moving as old Billy came closer. And then he throws up his hands.

'Ayeee!' he yells out in a voice to crack the rock. 'Ain Deil, bonnie Deil, dinna meddle wi' your ain Jimmie Lawson!' (*Laughter*)

LOWRY. There's a moral in that tale, if ye'd only look to it. In the light a man may forget the Deil; but in the dark, by his ainsel, he'll remember soon enough.

BALLARAT. Bring another bottle, Charlie. I'm drier than a kiln. Drink up, you old stone image!

NARRATOR. And he nudges the tall Dane, drowsing in his tattooed jungle. The sailor opens his eyes and laughs suddenly. (*Laughter*)

The long face creases like the summer sea. He rises to his feet and walks, swaying, to the door.

BALLARAT. Hey, squarehead! Where are you going?

LOWRY. Let him be. He's taken by a call of nature.

CHARLIE. Aye, let him be. A sweet man sober. But oh he's a tiger when he's roused! Don't lay a hand on him.

TREVELYAN. He'll slip on the tussock and break his neck. I'll go out and see him back to the door.

CHARLIE. Never fear, the Devil looks after drunks and fools. If he breaks his neckbone that's his own damned folly. No, he'll lie down and wake up when the frost begins to bite. I'll leave the door unlatched for him. But let's have another song, lad, before we sleep. It's near midnight and old bones are soon weary. I'll warrant you can sing the best of any.

NARRATOR. Webfoot Charlie eyes the Cornish miner with a look that could be love. His lips are wet in the wide, moony face. He is thinking of . . .

CHARLIE (*softly*). Gold. Like ripe walnuts in the hand. A young calf croaking blood through the new mouth made by a knife.

TREVELYAN. I'll sing you one my mother used to sing. It's a quaint old song, but it'll give us sweet thoughts for the pillow.

(*Voice only*) O dear light on yonder hill,
O'er the sheepfold shining still
From my true love's window sill,
Tell her I am waking.

Brown her face and neat her hair,
Sweet her breath as harvest air,
Light her foot upon the stair
At the junket-making.

Tell her what I dare not tell,
Lamp upon her window sill,
Tell her that I love her well
And my heart is breaking.

Gladly would I press her hand,
Gladly at the altar stand,
On her finger place the band,
Single life forsaking.

CHARLIE. Ah, didn't I say you had the true touch!

NARRATOR. says Webfoot Charlie. But his milky dead voice is put aside by a greater silence. In the husk of night the worm is quiet now. There is no moon awake in the world where the dead miners stand, or where Jack Winter tosses on his time sheeted bed. (*Music*)

But an illumination, like music from behind the sky, pierces the double night, the house of clay and the house of flesh. With shut eyes Jack Winter sees the dead girl, wrapped in a man's overcoat, stand at the foot of the stair. Her eyes have met those of the Cornishman, and from the commerce of their timeless look flows the agony of light that pricks dry Jack like a silver needle at the quick of knowledge. He weeps for the immortal joy of the dead, who has never wept for a living man or woman. The wound of the world's grief opens in the starless grave and ice mountain of his heart; and the tears flow as he listens. From the living light that is, was, and will be, ghosts no longer, the true dead speak.

TREVELYAN. Far have I come
In the forest of dead time
Crying your one name.
Under a cairn of sleep
Long had I lain.
I woke to your need.
My lost love found,
I shall not grieve again.

JENNY. With sheets of love folded
I have made our bed,
With stars of manuka.
I dreamed that you were dead
Under the world's mountain.
With hands of all giving
I welcome you home
To the song of the living.

TREVELYAN. Tell me, true love,
Did the night fall
Or did I dream?
The bonfire of all
Fills the slack vein,
Quickens the riddled bone,
And in the young light
Your praise is mine.

JENNY. I cannot tell.
Pierced by that light
We do not die again.
More than the world is
Our hearts contain.
In His true night
Our love is known.
Come then.

NARRATOR. The light falls silent. The music goes back behind the sky. The world's worm wakens. And from their hiding holes in nothingness the sly, sad dead run back to their lives. The first to find a voice is Webfoot Charlie.

CHARLIE. Back to your bed, lass! It's no time for you to be stirring.

JENNY. I heard the singing, father.

CHARLIE. That was Mr Trevelyan. He will stay the night. He has just come down from the Dunstan.

JENNY. I liked your song, sir.

TREVELYAN. If it pleased you, there's nothing better I could ask.

CHARLIE. Ah, don't be soft-soaping the lass! She's a swag of foolish thoughts in her head already. Go to your bed, Jenny!

NARRATOR. He clucks and shoos her toward the stair and her high hayloft bed. Then he turns down the wick of the kerosene lamp that hops like a flea in its tall glass chimney. At this sign the Preacher takes off his boots, lugs a blanket from a box in the corner, folds his dusty coat under his head, and stretches out by the woodash embers. He says *No* to the dark that creeps in beside

him, like a little negress with bulrush thighs and breasts of black ivory. He says *No*, and turns instead to the Africa of his dreams, where he sees for ever under closed lids a shark-toothed Devil dancing and a wooden judging God.

Ballarat Jake, at the other side of the embers, dressed for the grave in a calico shirt, lies down like a bearded Pharaoh in a gold sarcophagus. A swarm of bees settles in his kingly dead flesh, under the black bandages, and he does not cry out as their honey soaks through his limbs.

An hour passes, told by the wormy tick-tock of the mankind-measuring clock. The Preacher is dreaming of . . .

LOWRY. Robert Burns. With long hair in lady's curls and a brown cravat. Walking with him beside a drumming pebbled mill-stream and talking theology.

NARRATOR. Ballarat Jake is hugging with ghostly arms . . .

BALLARAT. In a bed of green dollar notes. A rustling Frisco singing girl with a ribbon round her neck, and nothing on at all.

NARRATOR. The Danish sailor, flat on his back a yard from the shanty door, under a small roof of spidery tussock and the moon's lantern, snores like a breaker and dreams of . . .

SAILOR. *Skoal!*

NARRATOR. And blubber Charlie, sweating and wakeful in the webfooted dark, lovingly unbuckles, beside the admonishing stream, the brown leather saddlebags, ferrets in their throats for the clotted blood of gold, and carries the bright nuggets to the grave he has prepared for them.

CHARLIE. *And in place of her sailor I tasted her charms* . . . . Lie snug, my silky darling!

NARRATOR. He strokes the bone-handled razor folded in his coat pocket. (*Pause and music*)

High in the blinkered house the young Cornishman looks at the face of the dead living girl, who drowses now in the nook of his arm. He smells the yeast of womanflesh that rises from her like the sweet smell of a byre. He hears beyond the window the long voice of water praising the years away. The mattress of manuka twigs on which they lie is a raft afloat on a milk sea of moonshine.

JENNY. And now you'll leave me and never come back.

TREVELYAN. No, love. I'll come with a horse and gig and take you away with me, to England. We'll be married in the church at Tintagel. It looks like a haystack, with a wooden cross on top of it. There'll be fiddles and rough cider. And inside there'll be boys in white linen, singing, and maids with flowers.

JENNY. I'm no maid.

TREVELYAN. No, you're a wife.

JENNY (*muffled*). It's funny, Will, I'm so hungry. I'd like to eat you up. I could eat a whole plate of mushrooms fried in butter.

TREVELYAN. We'll build a house of our own, a mile from the sea. With a big orchard behind it, with apples and pears and damsons, and red currant and black currant, and gooseberry and sugar plum. There'll be a walnut tree for the children to climb. And a roof made of sea slates. We'll write our name on every one of them.

JENNY. My father won't let me go.

TREVELYAN. Oh, he'll come round yet. He's a rough old dog, there's no doubt of it, but the money will take his fancy. He'll like to see you marry money.

JENNY. I'm afraid of him. He's been strange ever since Mother died. I keep my door locked because of him. He stands outside it in the dark, often, and I can hear him breathing.

TREVELYAN. All the more reason to go with me, love. He's not in good health, poor man. He told me as much tonight.

JENNY. I heard him go out an hour ago.

TREVELYAN. Yes, he'll be out looking for the sailor. He's not as hard-hearted as he'd like a man to believe.

JENNY. Don't go, Will!

TREVELYAN. We'll have many a night in the years to come, love. One day you'll be tired of my silly talk. I'll have to go now, for our own sakes. Your father won't take kindly to me, as a new member of the family, if he finds me here with you.

JENNY. Oh take care!

NARRATOR. But the Cornishman does not look behind him as he closes the attic door. He comes down the stairs like a whiskered tomcat, light on the balls of his bare feet. He looks out the shanty door at boulders like seals in moonlight. He walks a few steps to the corner of the house. In his heart an unaccustomed love is struggling with the stupid pride of the fortunate seducer. He does not hear the steps behind him, faint on the dry tussock. He whirls only at the blow of the razor, and cries out once as night comes down upon his eyes. (*Choking cry*)

TREVELYAN. Jenny!

CHARLIE. There's your blood pudding, my young bantam!

NARRATOR. Heavy with blood the moon is weeping. And stained with dark blood the stream snores time away in its shingle bed. The bushed owl hoots with blood on its claw. The rabbit screams as the kniving stoat weaves nearer. The king of the year is slain, mangled among the drenched corn. But girl of rock, sea-

girl and girl of flesh, coming with garlands, mourn for the ram's-head, bull-tasselled youth, lovely under the hour's knife. (*Fade*)

Webfoot Charlie bullocks the dead Cornishman's body to the side of the sleeping Dane, who lies like a second fallen Adam full length on the frosty earth. He thrusts the razor into the sleeper's hand. He tumbles the butchered carcass upon him. He runs to the house, shouting.

CHARLIE. Help, men, help!

BALLARAT. What is it?

CHARLIE. Ah Jake, there's murder done. The poor young man!

LOWRY. What's that ye're saying?

CHARLIE. Ah, there's a devil abroad tonight. The young man's dead. His throat's cut from ear to ear. And the damned sailor's lying boozed beside him, all bloody, with a razor in his hand.

BALLARAT. There's blood on you too, Charlie.

CHARLIE. I tried to lift him.

BALLARAT. I never saw the Dane use a razor.

CHARLIE. What do you mean, Jake?

BALLARAT. Only that it's a queer business.

LOWRY. *They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.*

*Therefore pride compasseth them about like a chain;*
*violence covereth them as a garment.*

*Their eyes stand out with fatness . . . .*

CHARLIE. You're mad as a maggot, Lowry!

LOWRY. Ah, a man's a wee mouse in a big barn. There's room enough for us a' when the end comes.

NARRATOR. The long dark rides over them. The single night returns, wrapping the wounded stones in swaddling bands. Jack Winter sleeps long and alone in the shroud of night. (*Fade and music*)

It is bright, early morning. Crickets whirr like musical clocks on branch and wall. From the cool road, dusty with sunlight, two girl hikers climb to the door of *The Drover's Rest*. The welcoming leaves nod to them. They are scrubbed and smooth and clean and hairless, hygienic as washing boards.

FIRST GIRL. Oh Hilda, isn't it quaint? Who'd live in a house made out of clay?

SECOND GIRL. It must be very old. No one could live in it now.

FIRST GIRL. Look! There's someone asleep by the fireplace.

SECOND GIRL. It's a drunk swagger. Goodness, how he smells! If there's one thing I can't bear it's the smell of a drunk man. He's old enough to know better too.

NARRATOR. But John Winter does not hear his early morning visitors. Crickets and girls' tongues, ticking at the double this fine, bright morning, do not reach his deaf ear. The single dream is broken, and his name is no longer Winter. The seas of the last grief have gone over him; he is locked in the cupboard of God's care. He is young Jack now, though his bones lie old and empty. The sun dances among his ruins.

FIRST GIRL. Look, Hilda, there's frost on his face!

PAT WILSON

## *Bowen Town*

FRIGHTENED by moonlight,
Which blazed along the beach
From a white orb hanging above
The dark pohutukawas on the point,
We woke there one night.
The light then seemed to reach
Right out into our tent as, move
By move, full round the point swung that moon giant.

The silhouetted
Mast of our boat rose
Into the dark blue sky. Behind
Her rigging hung the staring moon
As though rope-netted.
By now, in our bed-clothes,
We sat astonished and moon-blind,
While the light increased to a midnight noon.

All round us lay
The desert dunes and beaches
Of world-forgotten Bowen Town,
The single rocky point out to the left
Forming our bay,
To right all moon-bathed stretches,
Sand acres, wrapped in a gown
Of soft seas' foam and light, land cut adrift.

FLEUR ADCOCK

# *The Lover*

ALWAYS he would inhabit an alien landscape,
Someone else's setting; he walked with surly
Devotion the moist paths of a bush valley
Whose trees had spoken to one he could not keep
As friend; he would learn local names, claim kinship
By an act of will; then let his mind haunt
And cling as hands grasped branches, stones,
Eyes learnt by heart another sky's shape.

In late childhood he had lived a year
Emotionally wedded to an elm, whose leaves
Crumbling in all his pockets evoked rough
And bitter the warm bark; then a small creek
Had filled one summer with the breathing air
Of willows and brown water; by such loving
He cast off abounding more exacting dreams
And baffled others less than he would think.

Later, his enlarging world demanded
Mountains, passionate rivers, a harsh bay,
As wider symbols; where no loved face
Spread to his hand, he would stroke wind-grained
wood,
Learn and cherish a stone's contours, and,
Where once the grace of a girl's voice had spoken,
Set blind feet on the hare's path to walk
And closet with a rock his loving blood.

The climax never came; he might have cooled
His flesh utterly in the sudden river,
Or found long satisfaction in a haven
Made solitary by hills; but gradually
The challenging lust ebbed back unfulfilled.
Now, set apart, he lets the city's plan
Absorb him calmly; only now and then
Stares at the harbour, at the vivid sea.

JANET FRAME

# *Waiting for Daylight*

I

WHY doesn't the day speak? Has the four o'clock frost
got at its throat? No owl. No snuffling hedgehog;
or telegraphic leaf tapping out help help;
  or first bird or burst of ripening sky.

  My clock invested in the day's waking
  is clucking rich, luminous, and without light.
  If the day sleep it crash the stock and share
  of time who makes payment always
  the looked-for dividend
spilled out, meaningless, in fat multiple of sixty.

  So quiet. A thrush perhaps? A morepork?
  There are no snakes here but the split tongue
of frost, and its white coils tight
upon the suffocating bud; and its cast skin upon the trees
  and across the stiff grass. Why doesn't the day speak?
  If morning wake ever again
the sun has a shining pact
to remove this frost for cloud, snow, to dress an orchard
  as a bride at her wedding, and whiten the clock-face
of her obsessed groom, the mad season, chiming
the static wonder of his wife's new name
  Time and Place. Time and Place.

So quiet beyond the door. Does the day sleep for ever?
  There used to be morning. Morning happened always,
  with new gossip of light and bird spreading through the sky;
  on the lawn the railway blackbird
  tapping for truth; or in rain
the bloodless gratered worms lying dead, pale-pink and mauve
—they were truth too soon, no use for food,
  only for wonder. Yes, morning woke powerfully
  like a policeman shining a torch through the dark
  saying to night What are you up to, Move on there.
  And its light picked out the dead, the bird skeleton,

the trapped mouse, the bed of feline love,
and brought warm breakfast bowls of light
to all plants in prison, or burning at the stake, like roses.
And sometimes an early wind blew
and the dewdrops panicked, separated, and came together
again
lying on the nasturtium leaves.

2

Dog dog you have lapped the light, have worried, buried
the golden bone. The migration from the black star
is complete; black weed covers the earth
suffering no disease of light; man, you have gone blind saying
*If I open my fingers a little bit more*
*I can see* coal, evil, soot, blackberry, sunspot shadow,
not the radiance my idiot alarm clock promises.
Old man, fisherman pottering
the opaque river, puzzling if Greenwell's Glory
will angle more fish of dazzle than a forked pin;
Dog, Martian, man, old man,
go back to your kennel your star your linen womb
and wait for the day to come.

3

We wait. The negro dark whitens,
minstrels morning, takes the sun's apartheid promise
*From black cloud free*; pities the fair desperate heavy
blindness
of people, burdened with snow, falling
from sleep,
the sweet chariot swung low for to carry.

A. R. D. FAIRBURN

# *The Culture Industry*

THE word 'culture' is used in a variety of ways by different writers. The most usual meaning is defined by the Shorter Oxford in these terms: 'The training and refinement of mind, tastes, and manners; the condition of being thus trained and refined; the intellectual side of civilization.' The ideas and aims implied here, when conceived under the form, say, of Greek *kalokagathia*, or of Renaissance *virtu*, represent one of the highest projections of the human spirit.

In our own age, two things seem to have happened to the idea of culture. In the first place it has been narrowed greatly to signify, in the main, the practice and appreciation of the arts; and in the second, the dilettantism implied in this notion has achieved such a vogue that a new industry is being built up—one that has, among its other aims, the enlargement of its empire among the white-collar classes, and the development of State patronage. As our leisure increases, it is possible that the various activities that go under the name of 'culture' may become a rival to sport as a palliative for suburban boredom.

Of course the arts are an essential part of any genuine culture. Along with religion, philosophy and science, they are the means whereby individuals and communities become aware of themselves, and are conscious of meaning and value. Some would go further. In his latest book, *Icon and Idea*, Herbert Read argues that the image always precedes and makes possible the idea, and that the aesthetic provides the matrix of all meaning. Whitehead seems to have been moving towards the same conclusion along his own very different path. We can even find religious warrant: 'And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good'—the logical end of Creation being its perception and enjoyment in contemplation.

In none of these cases is there any suggestion that passive aesthetic contemplation can be divorced from the active processes of creation. Still less is it implied that in the mansion of the human spirit the rooms must have no doors or windows. One of the problems we have to face today is that the practitioners of art, science, religion and philosophy, as well as the engineers, the business men and the politicians, would all like to seal off their

particular room completely; or, failing that, to be able to use the other rooms as conveniences. The artists (and the art-fanciers) are just as single-minded in this respect as any other group, and in many cases are even more fanatical. Yet if we survey their various activities, we shall perhaps find ourselves asking how many of these have a bearing on any coherent notion of life lived more abundantly. The Greek and Renaissance ideals are remote from us, and we have generated nothing analogous to them. We lack the driving-force of an ideal conception of the natural aristocrat: who, though he directs his energies through some particular channel, is at the same time many-sided; who is highly-tempered yet lives in balance, sustaining within himself those great tensions of the spirit which give meaning to life. Even Liberalism, the highest attainment of the post-Renaissance period, is wilting in our eroded soil. Our humanism has gone flabby. It has become mere humanitarianism. And we are content to see our world split into fragments and handed over to a mob of specialists—mobilized to that paradoxical end, a hedonistic society living under the protection of the H-bomb.

In this situation 'culture', as a specialized activity rather like orchid-growing, is beginning to thrive. And since the objects on which it fastens its attention have had high prestige in the past, there is a general inclination to see them as being important at present. In many cases they may be so. But a reassessment is necessary. It is by no means to be taken for granted, for instance, that panel-painting can fulfil the same function today as it did in earlier centuries. Nor can we assume that with the vast expansion of recording and broadcasting, music will continue to have the same kind of significance as it previously possessed.

Nevertheless, a boom is in progress. Art books and LP records pour from the presses. The film is taken seriously, and provides one of the main topics of conversation when the gentlemen rejoin the ladies. Architecture and furnishing have become matters of intense interest, and it is almost impossible to avoid getting caught up in an interminable discussion of the modern home when one ventures abroad into company. In all the arts, but especially in literature, a huge critical pullulation goes on: we see the breeding of criticism on itself, layer on layer, and the reduction of the work of art, often enough, to the status of mere coat-hanger or laboratory specimen.

An understanding of the fine arts is part of the mental equipment of the civilized man. It is in painting, sculpture, music and poetry that the greatest concentration of aesthetic meaning, and

refinement of taste, occur. That interest in such things should be extended into the realm of domestic architecture and design might in itself be taken as a hopeful sign. We should not, however, be misled by appearances. I fear that there is in our day a great deal of aimlessness, and not a little that is shallow and pretentious, in the 'appreciation' of the arts. It is the artists and intellectuals themselves who are partly to blame. They tend to encourage preciousness, and the cult of aestheticism. Among the poets, for instance, it seems to be agreed that poetry should be written primarily for poets; its climate becomes more and more clinical, its implicit (and sometimes, as in the case of such writers as Wallace Stevens, quite explicit) subject becomes, more and more, simply poetry itself, hypostatized and regarded as pure end—although it should be evident that an art that gets itself into the position of the Oozlum bird is decadent, not renascent. In America the way to prestige, for some of the more fashionable academic critics, is to turn literary criticism into a debate as to how many angels can stand on the tip of a fountain-pen, and the same tendency is noticeable in a lesser degree in England. To the extent that poetry and painting are intended for a public, they are produced to meet the needs of the suburban culture-consumer, as interior decoration for his mind, as relief from ennui, or simply as ostentation. He must be regarded, however, as merely eavesdropping on the transactions of artists; and the more obscure the work, the greater the variety of poses and affectations, the more he feels privileged to be 'in the swim'. If his flesh can be made to creep deliciously by occasional references to salvation and damnation, or rape, or nuclear holocausts, so much the better. But it is all a game, to be played in the intervals between mowing the lawn and wiping the dishes.

Left to itself, all this dabbling with the arts might be considered more or less harmless, if only because its essentially passive character would set limits to its growth. But a different situation arises when we find that it is being *organized*, and in a bigger and bigger way. Organization of certain kinds is, of course, inevitable. The maintenance of any sort of cultural life at all depends on books being published, concerts and plays being presented, and so on. Nobody but a barbarian would wish all such necessary activity to cease. The growth of the Culture Industry, as I have called it, involves something over and above this. It has brought further developments, of a questionable kind. For one thing, it encourages the dilettante approach, rather than trying to deepen the foundations of our culture and make it more

substantial. And for another, it is associated with the drift towards monopoly control that is common to all departments of social life, in which the State plays an increasingly important role.

If the Government (or a local body) is to spend public money on fostering the arts, we are entitled to ask questions. Is this or that activity really worth bothering about, from the point of view of the public welfare? Is such support likely to do harm rather than good in certain instances? To what extent can the general taxpayers be expected to support the arts? And is there any danger that, if the thing went far enough, something like a dictatorship of taste might come into effect? Already there are signs of the emergence of a new managerial class. If we hold to the view that art is what is produced by artists, in accordance with their own impulses and in response to public appetite, we may be inclined to regard this last danger as a very real one.

Not that this view of the artist is entirely satisfactory. It may be well to pause here and examine this question briefly, for it is really the nub of the whole matter. M. H. Abrams, in *The Mirror and the Lamp*, demonstrates most vividly the aesthetic revolution that has taken place since romanticism took charge in the latter part of the eighteenth century. For over two thousand years the ruling assumption had been that the work of art was (a) mimetic, in that it was an imitation of some aspect of an objective world, and (b) pragmatic, in that the artist, in producing it, set out to please an audience. The modern idea that art is primarily expressive, and that the artist is a self-sufficient 'creator', has come to provide the basis of contemporary aesthetics. We all believe in it today, and I think we are right in regarding it as being, at the very least, an indispensable part of the truth. But when carried to the point of excluding any necessary relationship with either an objective world or a society with whom the artist communicates, it leads to the blight of aestheticism against which I am inveighing.

The 'crisis of expressionism', as we may call it, provides the main battle-ground of aesthetic theory in our time. What such forerunners of the Constructivist movement have been trying to do is to escape from the solipsism of pure expressionist doctrine and practice. In *Icon and Idea* Herbert Read makes a gallant attempt, not merely to reconcile the objective or Constructivist approach with the subjective basis of expressionism, but to go much further and *identify* them. The fallacy underlying his treatment of the theme arises, I think, from his fundamentally

romantic and anarchistic point of view, which he has never abandoned. In a word, he regards the individual will and the private world as being fully reconcilable, in theory, with the social will and the public world. A more historical and traditional view might suggest that there must always be a conflict, tragic in essence, between the individual and society; and that it is within the tension of this situation that significant art comes into being.

What needs to be said, however, is that in a society that is not disintegrating, and of which the artist is still a part, there will be enough common ground to allow this dialectic to continue fruitfully; but that when the artist withdraws from society (or is ejected), he naturally falls back on pure expressionism as the rationale of his situation. With the complete breach, tension goes, and with it the dialectic. Art then becomes trivial, escapist, and devoted more and more to a 'religion of aestheticism'. It is the backwash from this that threatens to swamp the goloshes of the suburbs and give them bad colds.

While the breach between the artist and society persists, he must, to save his integrity, continue to assert his claim to complete autonomy. But pure expressionism is, nonetheless, a blind alley, from which the more responsible artist will try to blast a way into a more objective world. And it is this attempt, chiefly on the part of a number of architects and designers, that is worth giving public support to, if public support is to be given to anything.

The manager or impresario with a will to power comes into this situation under false pretences. He finds it easy to pose as the modern equivalent of the old-style patron, the representative of society. In doing so, he confuses the issue. For he is not really helping towards a renewal of the contract between the artist and society: he is merely building his own private empire. It must be said, of course, that the impresario, when his services are needed, serves as a useful functional link between the artist and the public; but the closer he gets to exercising monopoly power, the more likely he is to try to foist his own ideas on both. The dealer-rackets, and similar parasitic growths on the arts, that have been so troublesome in the past are now beginning to get mixed up with public managerial rackets. A situation in which the artists are like performing ponies in a circus, who are given a lump of sugar when they do their stuff as the ring-master wishes, is one in which art that has any vitality is eventually tamed or fed to the lions for supper. We may regard with a suspicion that

merges into hostility the high-pressure organization of 'culture' by professional showmen. Carried on in the atmosphere of the revivalist's tent, it produces at best a vulgar-genteel cult and a fug of triviality, at worst a distortion of public taste and a great deal of unhappiness among artists.

It would be ridiculous to suggest that the suburbs as a whole had by this time become fully 'culture-conscious'. Horses, motor-cars, divorce cases, sport, crime, pornography and alcohol are still the main interests of the majority of people. If, however, we compare the position today with that, say, thirty years ago, it is evident that a change has occurred. Interest in the arts has increased greatly, whereas appetite for the other things (alcohol excepted) has remained at the same level.

Those who would make a black-and-white distinction between, for instance, art-addicts (as 'goodies') and sport-addicts (as 'baddies') are surely presumptuous. It is natural for human beings to be interested in a wide range of things, serious and trivial, sordid and uplifting. What matters is the general *tone* or *temper* of individual experience, and of communal living. Where there is vitality, people will naturally have a greater diversity of interests. When an exceptional individual deliberately narrows this range, it will be with the aim of seeking deeper and more concentrated experience. But he must in this case be wary of getting himself trapped in one segment of the world, and cutting himself off from the general process of life.

The question that must be asked of both the art-lover and the man who interests himself in sport, mechanics, alcohol, gardening, or any other matter, is whether the thing he is doing helps him to realize his potentialities as a human being—whether it is what Berenson calls 'life-enhancing'. If he has taken to horse-racing, or alcohol, or shockers, or charitable work, as a drug, a means of escape from wider experience of which he is in some way afraid; if he is using vicarious experience (as spectator, reader, or film-goer) simply as a substitute for direct experience of his own—then the diagnosis points to loss of tone, and lack of spirit. Of course, one must be careful in making judgements about these matters. We all need, and use, drugs: but they should provide relief, not become a way of life. And vicarious experience is essential: but it should heighten our awareness and our desire for active living, not imprison us in a dream-world.

I could pursue this line of thought indefinitely, and perhaps end by getting myself up a moralistic gum-tree, or stuck in a metaphysical bog. It will be sufficient, for present purposes, to

take a common-sense view of the things I have been talking about. And common sense suggests to me that much of the interest taken in the arts today is little different in kind from the interest taken in sport, crime, alcohol, and a number of other distractions, in that it provides evidence of a lowering of tone, of frustration, confusion of mind and lack of spirit, rather than of any Elizabethan renaissance.

These ills are general, and are not likely to be remedied by any hasty therapy. But we can at least clear our minds of cant, and try to make a calculated appraisal of our situation.

Those of us who are unwilling to think of 'culture' as either a shot of morphia or an organized tour through a chocolate-factory, and who are aware of the inter-relations of politics, economics, and the arts, are under some temptation to look for short-cuts. I think most of us have outgrown the belief that everything can suddenly be put right by political revolution. There may be people who believe in the possibility of a world-wide religious revival; if they are wedded to that belief, they are unlikely ever to outgrow it. There remains the chance of a bet on the last race: an aesthetic crusade. This, for some of our number, is full of promise. They point to the hosts of the infidels—or, if I may jumble history, the Philistines. They see evidence of a change of heart, of an increasing concern about aesthetics.

Even as I write, and break off for a moment to glance at the morning paper, I come across a tiny footnote to my dissertation. Under the heading, 'Growing Interest in the Arts', a précis is given of the annual report of our Regional Council of Adult Education. After quoting figures to show the great increase in numbers since 1949, the report says: 'There is evidence that economics, psychology and now the arts have each in turn taken the centre of the stage.' What nostalgic memories, what withered hopes that sentence must evoke for anybody over the age of fifty! Economics in 1936, aesthetics in 1956, with a hunting foray into the jungle in between.

Politics and economics must inevitably affect all of us, and the study of them is therefore vitally necessary. (It is a pity that in New Zealand, at the present time, a general conspiracy has been entered into to shelve all conflicts of principle in this field.) Religious awareness, in the broad and non-fanatical sense, is probably essential to the imaginative life of *homo sapiens*. And aesthetic consciousness is no doubt as fundamental as Herbert Read sets out to prove it to be. But perish the thought of crusading. Salvationist campaigns carried out in the name of any of the

higher verities always end in relapse or perversion. On the rare occasions when genuine movements of the spirit occur they are spontaneous, and historically logical. Even then, they cannot continue merely as a series of waves of enthusiasm. They must be absorbed into the structure of society, which they are almost certain to modify. Using another analogy, they must provide pabulum, not cosmetic.

If anything is to be done through organization it will need to be genuinely educational, not merely titillating, and it will have to be based on a long-term strategy that *begins* with Design (in its social context) and only comes to the 'fine arts' when a solid foundation has been laid. There is no useful end to be served by turning an art gallery into a place where the dilettanti can dabble in the fine arts, and thereby subtly debase them. The jaw-bone of an ass, wagging incessantly about 'modern art', will certainly not prove effective against Goliath. The fine arts are of great importance, and should not be neglected, even under present conditions. But they need *protection* rather than 'popularization'. An art gallery should aim at presenting the tradition, and establishing and preserving high standards. Apart from this, it could well become an instrument of basic aesthetic education by running a continuous programme relating to Design—displays of pots and kettles, knives and forks, bottles, tools, architecture, furniture, town planning, and the ten thousand other things that go to make up our environment. By implanting in the minds of people a variety of images reflecting tomorrow's possibilities, we might hope, in the long run, to lay a foundation of taste that would give meaning to the fine arts, while at the same time hastening the processes by which our environment may be redesigned.[1]

I come now to what must be regarded, on a long view, as the most significant and (I would say) dangerous development affecting

[1] Mondrian strove 'towards the end of art as a thing separated from our surrounding environment, which is the actual plastic reality. But this end is at the same time a new beginning . . . By the unification of architecture, sculpture, and painting, a new plastic reality will be created. Painting and sculpture will not manifest themselves as separate objects, nor as 'mural art' which destroys architecture itself, nor as 'applied' art, but *being purely constructive* will aid the creation of an environment not merely utilitarian or rational but also pure and complete in its beauty.' (Quoted by Read in *Icon and Idea.*) As a Constructivist manifesto, laying the basis of social art, this is excellent. All I would question is whether representative art, deriving from common natural images, need be excluded from this new world. Is the old iconoclastic heresy creeping in once again?

the arts—by which I mean the extension of State patronage and sponsorship.

There seems to be common agreement at the present time among all those who, for either good reasons or bad, wish to advance the arts that the State should be looked to for support. This is in accordance with the trend of the age. The power of the paternalistic State grows apace, and gradually becomes more totalitarian in character. This is accepted, even welcomed, by many people—not only, in our day, by socialists and communists, but also by conservative politicians who realize that it will augment their personal power and importance. The two-party system becomes in effect, more and more, a monolithic administrative apparatus which in return for the centralized power vested in it consents to play the part of Santa Claus. Other people, with theoretical objections to totalitarianism, adopt a cheerfully defeatist attitude. They are prepared to 'relax and enjoy it'.

Some economists tell us that, in the historical circumstances in which we find ourselves, we have only two things to choose from—public monopoly or private monopoly—and that the arts, like everything else, must eventually fit into one or other of these patterns. Our economic system, or the greater part of it, is at present controlled by a Heath Robinson blend of the two; and our lives remain tolerable only because neither has yet gained complete ascendancy. I do not, myself, think we should enjoy either very much if it came to the point, and I think it is well worth while putting up a fight. Certainly any artist who gives positive encouragement to State expenditure on the arts—especially to certain forms of it—is asking for a collar and chain. For State subsidies mean some measure of State control sooner or later, however much disguised it may be.

It is not only in the arts that this problem arises. The effects of State intervention in medical practice are not yet fully apparent, but it is clear that the profession will have to resist encroachment on its intellectual authority. The University, which once was privately endowed, is now dependent on State funds, and will also find itself having to stave off pressures that threaten to limit academic freedom. The arts, above all other human activities except religion and love, should be carried on by individuals acting in free association. There should be no suggestion, even, of the sort of framework of curricular policy which, properly enough, governs the University.

Humanly speaking, it is understandable that business men, caught in this drift, should accept the rule of expediency and

pursue their own private ends. What is more alarming to contemplate is *le trahison des clercs* —the willingness of so many artists, writers and intellectuals to allow themselves to be sealed off in a sort of 'aesthetic world' from the general processes of society, and to become a charge on the State. Among the younger writers the soup-kitchen mentality is strongly in evidence. Some of them give the impression that they are anxious to allow the State to take over all power both secular and spiritual, so long as they are provided with the means of fabricating their private worlds. The artist, if he values his soul, can never afford to make the eunuch's bargain: 'Give me a hand-out for Art, and I'll agree to keep off politics, economics and religion.' It must not even be remotely implied.

The sums of money at present being expended by the State on supporting the arts are modest in size, but pressure is building up. Voices have been raised that are loud enough to have been heard by the Minister of Education, who has spoken about the possibility of setting up an Arts Council similar to that which operates in Britain. It is to be assumed that such a body would become the channel through which considerably greater amounts would be expended.

One would think that the use of public money to subsidize culture, and the clamant demands for more to be provided, would bring howls of rage from the majority who contribute most of the rates and taxes. I have no doubt there are mutterings. I muttered myself a while ago when somebody proposed a tax of a penny a glass on beer to provide funds for the promotion of culture; and began to plan a campaign demanding a tax on the arts in order to provide me with beer-money. But one doesn't, in fact, hear much objection. The reason for this, I think, is that so many other groups besides the artists and the art-lovers have a vested interest in expanding the Culture Industry. Governments gain credit for being concerned with the things of the spirit when they set aside even small sums for the advancement of culture. They may even find it helpful, in providing 'full employment', to spend public money on the arts through such devices as Roosevelt's W.P.A. scheme. City councils maintain art galleries, seldom because their members are even remotely interested in the arts, but for reasons of prestige. Newspapers, too, have a stake in the business. Nowadays art means copy. An artist such as Picasso (his merits apart) is God's gift to the journalist looking for odd and interesting 'angles'. By keeping up an incessant chatter about art they provide yet another form of distraction for their readers, and

create the impression that a great revival is in full swing. Effervescence, however, is not necessarily a sign of vitality. It may indicate excessive $CO_2$, or even rabies.

There is one thing that needs to be said quite bluntly about State expenditure on the arts. There is no law against private patronage. There is nothing whatever to prevent any group of people from getting together and subscribing money for the encouragement of any cultural activities. So when we persuade the Government or a local body to step in and spend taxpayers' or ratepayers' money on such projects, what we are really doing is to use the State apparatus as a means of getting the fellow next door (who drinks beer and backs horses, and is taxed heavily for these pleasures) to subsidize our own diversions—or at any rate, things we consider to be important. The economics of the matter are quite simple, and should be kept in mind.

In ordinary equity, therefore, the Government has a responsibility to see that public money spent in such ways is in fact directed towards ends that have some demonstrable public value; and that it is not devoted to entertainment disguised as 'culture', or to what I have called cosmetic purposes—to making the community appear to be more cultured than in fact is the case. My own view is that, in the main, patronage of the arts should be left to be provided for voluntarily out of the very ample private income of the community. This would give a better measure of the real importance we attach to the arts, and prevent us from over-reaching ourselves. In the long run it would be much better for the health of the arts.

There is another quite general consideration to be kept in mind, as a restraint on our enthusiasm. Apart from anything Herbert Read may say about the aesthetic process, apart from the desirability of doing something to regenerate that process, aesthetics provides no substitute for ethics, or for Christian charity. Although we are entitled to accept, as a reasonable working hypothesis, the belief that people are likely to lead more orderly lives, and to behave better towards their neighbours, when they live in an aesthetically satisfying environment, we cannot take too much for granted. People with strong artistic appetites, from the Emperor Nero downwards, have often been inferior human beings. One can easily imagine a beautiful and functional building which in fact houses gas-chambers. The transcendental beauty and nobility of the world of great music does not prevent musicians from fighting like cats. We cannot afford to put all our eggs in the basket of aesthetics.

If the State decides, with some backing of public opinion, that the spending of a certain amount of public money on the arts will improve the general quality of life, the question that arises is: In which directions can it be spent most profitably, with propriety, and without doing harm to the arts? Assuming that the drift of history is not going to land us in a sort of low-grade Byzantinism, and that these matters are worth being treated with hopeful seriousness, let us consider some of the projects that are at present operating, or that are being advocated.

In the first place, I think it is possible to go a long way further on the 'interpretative' side of art than on the 'creative'. The danger of intellectual corruption does exist there, but it is not as serious as in the case of the 'creative' artist. It is unlikely, for instance, that National Orchestra programmes will ever show the bad effects of political pressure. The more important problem here is that of equity. I find it difficult to agree that such an organization as the National Orchestra, admirable as it is, should be kept going indefinitely in order to satisfy a section of the public if they cannot afford to pay the cost. Like tariff protection, State support for it is justifiable on the assumption that something is being nursed that will eventually be able to stand on its own feet. (Why it should be financed out of radio licence fees instead of through the Consolidated Fund is beyond rational comprehension.) But for various reasons—chiefly the claim the Orchestra may have to being an instrument of general education—the case against State subsidy of the Orchestra is not likely to be pressed strongly by those who dislike State control on principle.

I am delighted to read in the press that the New Zealand Players intend to turn themselves into a public company. There is no doubt in my mind that this is precisely the pattern that is best suited for any such enterprise. It gives every member of the community a chance to offer his support, and at the same time it removes any invidious suggestions of political control or restriction, or of unfairness to other sections of the community. However one may feel about the present status of the National Orchestra, there is no gainsaying that it would be better for it to be run in this way. If the question of maintaining high standards is raised in connection with either of these organizations, I would say, unhesitatingly, that honesty of taste comes before refinement of taste; and that genuine refinement must be based on honesty.

The proposal to establish an Arts Council is one that may be regarded with a certain amount of suspicion. If it were the outcome simply of an agreement among the various art societies and

similar bodies, it might serve certain useful purposes. But State organization and State subsidy are both ideas which, in essence, reflect the business man's and the bureaucrat's conception of art rather than the artist's. Even if such assistance is well-intentioned, and limited in scope, it harbours the seed of future trouble.

Radio broadcasting is an institution that has become a permanent part of our social life. Because of its very nature it tends to fall into the totalitarian pattern. In England this problem has been dealt with by establishing a Corporation, with a *Parliamentary* charter. This is perhaps the most enlightened solution available. Direct political control is deliberately avoided as far as possible. Although the B.B.C. is a monopoly, the selection of material for broadcast is in practice left to a large group of individuals who are allowed considerable discretion. The B.B.C. has not escaped accusations of favouring certain kinds of opinion, but its record is on the whole so much better than we might expect that it must be regarded as the most satisfactory form of organization so far devised. Australia has allowed broadcasting to be split up among a number of controlling interests, public and private. The results are not entirely satisfactory. In New Zealand we have a broadcasting monopoly operated under direct Governmental control. In principle, there is nothing whatever to be said in defence of this. The results are not as bad as they might have been; on the other hand, they are not nearly as good as they could be if the English pattern were adopted. It is astonishing that our habit of slavish devotion to English models should have broken down in this particular instance; and still more astonishing that a conservative government, nominally committed against State socialism, should have continued the form of control introduced by its political opponents. I may say that I know of no member of the staff of the Broadcasting Service who is not of the opinion that better work could be done under Corporation control.

When we come to 'creative' art, things become more sticky. I think the setting up of a State Literary Fund can be justified, provided it restricts its function to making possible the publication of all work that appears to have any sort of value at all; and provided those who are appointed to administer it are willing to resign at once if official objections are made to their sponsoring a publication because it has some kind of doctrinal slant, religious or political. From a social point of view it is more necessary that literary works should be *put on record* than that they should be acclaimed by reviewers, or make money for their authors. A State Literary Fund Committee must not try to be too highly selective,

for that would imply a sharpening of the critical function that is out of place. Better that a great deal of apparently mediocre work should be published than that any sort of dictatorship of taste should be set up.

Grants made for the sustenance of writers raise a more difficult problem. Certain works of public record (historical and biographical) can be quite properly assisted by State funds without risk of intellectual corruption. Yet even here we should be extremely circumspect. It would be easy to arrive by slow stages at the point where history is re-written to order by State-employed professionals, as happened in Nazi Germany, and as has become the standard procedure in the U.S.S.R. If State funds are to be used for any such purpose, it had in most cases best be done under the aegis of the University, which provides a buffer against political control and helps to maintain some sort of objectivity.

Poetry and fiction should, in my view, remain completely exempt from State patronage—except for the recording function provided by the State Literary Fund. They are of value only when they are the work of independent artists. Put a novelist on the pay-roll of the State and sooner or later you turn him into a tom-cat (*arrangé*) that comes to the kitchen door for its milk, and in return begs prettily or catches mice.

In general—State aid or none—I wish that we could be less vulgarly self-conscious about our effort at cultural advancement. The serious artist, above all people, regards with suspicion anything that smells of culture-climbing. His maximum *demand*, as has often been said, is to be *let alone*. The careerists and parasites who clamour for 'recognition' (meaning, not the sort of *understanding* the genuine artist values more than any other thing, but does not expect to be able to command at will—but *money*) should be ignored.

# COMMENTARIES

## *Views of China**

### FARMING AND POPULATION Charles Hilgendorf

SOMEONE, at the British Legation in Peking, who had been in China for the last five years, said that only after the first three days in the country did he feel capable of writing a book about it. Having spent three weeks in mainland China, I am obviously over the book-writing stage, but still feel rash enough to make some general comments. However, it cannot be too much emphasized that it is very difficult to be objective, even about what one sees, in a place so big, so varied and so controversial as China.

It was obvious that the individuals in our party not only drew different conclusions from what they saw but actually saw different things when looking at the same scene.

To me, the most striking impression of present-day China is that it really is communist. There is a complete dictatorship, intensive and all-pervading propaganda, secret police and spies, standardization of behaviour and apparent standardization of thought, armed soldiers seldom out of sight and mass executions. Some people have thought that communism would have little deep and lasting effect on China; that the vast population, ancient and stable civilization and China's normal resistance to new ideas would mean that communism was merely a superficial and transitory phase. Among the people we met I saw no sign that this was so: they appeared to have swallowed communism hook, line and sinker. On the other hand, it seems likely that the ordinary peasant is not interested in political philosophies but only in the promise of more food and better living conditions.

Some of the most serious flaws of the communist idea stem from one of its central characteristics; but dictatorship gives some initial advantages in backward countries since great social and economic changes can be brought about more quickly (though not necessarily better) than by any other method. It is interesting to speculate on

*The writers of these articles, and Dr W. R. Geddes of Auckland University College whose photographs accompany them, were members of the group who visited China in April and May at the invitation of the Chinese People's Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.

how much those beneficial changes that have taken place over the last few years in China are due to communism, and how much to the fact that for the first time for one hundred years, China has a strong and apparently stable government which is in actual control of the whole country.

There is no doubt that great material progress is being made. New railways, new highways, new buildings, in and near towns, and of rather poor quality, new water conservation, flood protection and irrigation schemes, new heavy industry in the North East, are very obvious.

Reasonably impartial observers in China have pointed out these two contrasting aspects of mainland China today. On the one hand tyranny and terror: on the other hand a massive effort to improve natural resources and capital equipment, accompanied by a considerable improvement in the living standards of the people. It is not quite clear that this improvement is as marked as has been supposed, though it probably is so in the towns: but the population in towns is one hundred million against five hundred million in villages.

The farms shown to visitors are either state farms or, more usually, advanced-stage co-operatives which have been in operation for some years. They are usually near big towns and have had the advantage of what technical advice is available. They are show places, not only for foreign visitors, but for peasants from a large area. Some of them have a kind of public relations officer. They are obviously much more efficient than neighbouring areas but just how much is a matter of opinion.

Railways in China are naturally only the easiest way between one town and another, but even so in some thousands of miles of rail travel, one passes near enough to a good many villages to see that the standard of living in most of them is very far below that seen in the villages on the co-operative farms we visited.

Among my most vivid memories of China are the two villages I was taken to by mistake. A chauffeur, an interpreter and I set out one morning from Peking for a co-operative farm which neither of my companions had visited. We drove some thirty miles in the right direction and then asked the ubiquitous military gentleman the way and he told us what to do at the next two or three crossroads. The Chinese language is said to have no method of indicating right or left but contents itself with saying 'go north', 'go west' and so on. This is efficient enough if one knows which is north or west, but it was a heavily overcast morning and we evidently made the wrong turn at all crossroads.

After pounding at high speed along a wholly inadequate mud track, which gave full rein to the natural exuberance of the normal Chinese driver, we skidded to a standstill some inches short of the cesspool which forms the focal point of many villages. In our wake we left two mixed rows of squeaking children and pigs; and still fluttering against the windscreen was a sizeable flock of hens. The entire village of several hundred people seemed to be round the car before we could get out and one felt again, as so often in China, how pleasant it was to be able to give entertainment so easily.

It was, however, very different from the usual well regulated, if not stage-managed, reception by a small group of village dignitaries. It would have been interesting to understand the wildly animated explanation as to why we had arrived at the wrong village, but it was even more interesting to look round an unscheduled village.

The living conditions and the clothes of the people were vastly different from those we usually saw. About the only similarity was that there were still very few flies.

Apart from comparison of villages, I had some opportunity to judge comparative yields on the farms we were shown and the general countryside. Wheat is much the same the world over and it looked as though the average yield round Peking might be about twenty bushels (average for China fifteen bushels) as against forty on the selected farms. As gross profit in China is very closely related to net profit it may be that the poorer peasant's income is roughly half what it is on the type of farm we saw. Typical, total rates of pay on state farms and better co-operatives were seven hundred and fifty yuan per family or five hundred yuan per worker or one hundred and seventy yuan per person per year. If this is double the income of the poorer peasant, eighty-five yuan per person is getting very low indeed. Seven yuan go to the pound sterling but this perhaps does not mean very much. What is important is that eighty-five yuan, if all spent on rice, will buy less than the ration at present allowed for the manual worker.

By far the most striking feature of the agricultural situation at the moment is that within the last few months the number of peasants in co-operatives has increased from two hundred and seventy-three thousand households in September 1954 to one hundred and six million, or some ninety per cent of the total, today. Co-operatives are of various types and most of the newly formed ones pay the peasant rent for the amount of land he puts into the pool, as well as a labour reward. The policy is, however, rapidly

to reduce and then eliminate the amount paid as rent and make all payments in return for the work done.

The Government is gambling very heavily on the co-operatives giving a greatly increased agricultural production: the aim is six point eight per cent per year which is very high indeed. The increase is required partly to raise the standard of living of the peasant and partly to provide surplus agricultural produce for export, in exchange for capital equipment.

Land was never held in large areas in China but nevertheless it was the redistribution of land to the peasants under the Land Reform Policy that made the success of the communist revolution possible. It is therefore the more strange that after waiting for some hundreds of years to acquire their own land, the peasants should, after five years, be willing to give up the private ownership of their farms. Though it is hard to believe that this has been an entirely voluntary movement, it seems true that it is predominantly so. Skilful propaganda plus the hope of a higher income have been important factors. Combination of the very small holdings (about an acre) under good management is an obvious advantage. The co-operatives, which have been going for some years, have had this good management, plus considerable help with fertilizers and equipment, so that the income of the workers on them is higher than that of individual peasants.

On the other hand, even in North China, where there are very large areas of flat land, and wheat is the predominant crop, increased farm size only shows overwhelming advantages if there is considerable mechanization; and there is little real likelihood of this for many years. If cultivation is done by a single-furrow wooden plough or by hand it does not matter very much if the field is an acre or one hundred acres. In South China, which grows predominantly rice, the advantage is even less obvious. Paddy fields which must be kept flooded for considerable periods are often less than a quarter of an acre and each is usually on a different level from those adjoining. Here mechanization is not only not available but of little use if it was.

Some of the established and advanced type co-operatives (collectives) I saw contained up to a thousand original holdings. The management of an enterprise of this kind, with perhaps several thousand fields and fifteen hundred workers, needs to be very efficient indeed. If all the one hundred odd million peasants go into co-operatives on this scale one hundred thousand extremely efficient managers are required immediately. If the peasants go into rather smaller co-operatives of say one hundred holdings, then

one million managers of considerable ability are required. It seems very unlikely that anything like these numbers are available.

If they are not and if there is any slackening of effort by the individual worker, because the argument that his own unaided effort on his own plot of land means either starvation or plenty for him no longer applies, then there may be some striking repercussions.

Any discussion of the mechanization of Chinese agriculture raises some interesting points. Apart, possibly, from deeper ploughing with tractors and the use of better pumps for irrigation, I thought that mechanization would have little effect on crop yields. Fertilizer and particularly sulphate of ammonia is certainly of much greater importance. However, mechanization would certainly reduce the amount of labour required. To the ordinary visitor this might seem a disadvantage rather than an advantage, but, astonishingly enough, the official view is that China has an overall shortage of labour for industrial development in the North East and agricultural development in the North West.

Not once did I find a Chinese who would admit anything disquieting in China's annual population increase of twelve million, or two per cent a year.

It is admittedly difficult to visualize a country with a present population of six hundred million. Even after seeing that, I cannot, though some can, imagine China with a population of twelve hundred million in less than forty years. The imaginative few seem to give it up at this stage and do not paint rosy pictures of twenty-four hundred million in seventy odd years or five thousand million in one hundred and ten years—at which stage there would be rather less than standing room.

Until the Chinese Government shows some awareness of the vast problem posed by this population increase, the standard of living will remain relatively low. Trade will remain restricted by the small purchasing power of the people: and not all the Picasso doves in China will persuade foreigners that China will have no long term expansionist policy.

## HISTORY IN CHINA Angus Ross

THE visitor to communist China is impressed by many things—the size of the country, the even more important and quite staggering size of the population, the stability and apparent efficiency of the government in Peking, the fact that the rulers of the Chinese are

not merely leaders of impoverished embittered peasants seeking land and other reforms but genuine Communists, well schooled in Marxism-Leninism, and determined to shape society according to that philosophy, the forcefulness of the educational programme in 'the battle for literacy', the intensity and volume of government propaganda, the colossal scale of the drive towards industrialization, and the spirit in which problems are being tackled and solved. History on a grand scale and of the utmost significance for the Chinese—and consequently for Asia and the world—is certainly being made in China. Scholarly study of that history would require attainments, facilities and conditions I did not possess or could not command in my brief visit to China. Nevertheless meetings with Chinese professors of history enabled me to glean something of what is being done in my own field of study.

History is being written or rewritten in communist China. So far, most of the new histories are in Chinese but a few translations have been made. For example, the English translation of Hu Sheng's *Imperialism and Chinese Politics* was reviewed in *Landfall*, December 1955, by James Bertram, who mentioned 'The vocabulary of this work is relentlessly Marxist, and very tedious'. The whole approach and the entire treatment of the subject matter are in the most thoroughly Marxist tradition possible. In this and in its strong Chinese nationalism, it appears to be typical of the 'new' history.

Since all professors and lecturers in history in Chinese universities today declare themselves to be ardent Marxists, only Marxist interpretations of history can be expected from them for some years to come. History students appear to be safeguarded against contamination by the reading of non-Marxist books and periodicals. Thus, on the open shelves in the Sun Yat-sen University at Canton, I saw what I judged to be all the best English and American journals in physics and chemistry. I looked around for their equivalent in history and international relations but they were missing: on current affairs and modern history, the only journals to be seen there were 'safe' communist publications, *The Marxist Quarterly*, *Science and Society*, the monthly journal in English of the Communist Party of India, and other communist offerings. I did see one copy of the *English Historical Review* in Peking University, but it was in a professor's room. I failed to see the periodicals generally available to the students at Peking, although I tried twice to do so. On both occasions—at 5.30 p.m. one day and at 11.30 a.m. another—I was told that the room had closed and the staff were about to leave. I was taken, however, to see the

many historical works in English which had been inherited from the fashionable Yenching University, an American foundation with close ties with Harvard but now incorporated with the old Peita or national university of Peking. To reach these books on the library's top floor, we had to have a chain at the foot of the last flight of stairs unlocked and a door at the top also unlocked. I could not help feeling that the chain and the locked door were symbolic of the outlook of the New China on the multifarious teachings of the West, apart from the Marxist, and said 'This section of the library is not used much now'. My professor escort replied: 'No—you see the approach of most of these historians', and he waved to the loaded shelves, 'is fundamentally wrong. Only our most advanced students, engaged in research, consult these books now.' I said I was glad to hear they were used, and made the mental note that at least they had not been destroyed. I knew that American writers have referred to the burning of many books, including Chinese classical works, in China.

Anxious to discover when the professors I met had become Marxists, I asked them questions on the subject. When Professor Chien Po-tsan, senior professor of history at Peking University, said 'I became a Marxist many years ago. My study of Chinese history made me a Marxist', I believed him. When others told me the same or a similar story, I wasn't so sure. My doubts were increased by reading the 'Report on the Question of Intellectuals', delivered by Chou En-lai on 14 January 1956 at a meeting held under the auspices of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. Inter alia, the Premier said: 'Events are daily proving to Chinese intellectuals that unless they range themselves on the side of the working class and the Communist Party, there is no other way open to them. . . . As for the progressives, we should also help them to continue to advance, to study Marxism-Leninism harder, to remove all vestiges of capitalism, individualism and idealism in their way of thinking. . . . Since we already have rich experience in remoulding intellectuals, and a great deal has been achieved in this respect, there is no need to discuss in detail whether they can or cannot be remoulded.' I never learned how far the professors I met had been 'remoulded' or whether or not they had all been 'progressives' before the Revolution. Of one thing, however, I am certain: the statement made by Professor C. P. FitzGerald in his paper on 'Continuity in Chinese History'[1]

[1] *Historical Studies—Australia and New Zealand.* Vol. 7, no. 26, May 1956, p.137.

that 'Chinese history was thereafter (i.e., from the Han dynasty onwards) written to a pattern, and to serve a purpose' will apply to the writing of Chinese history for some years to come. In this respect, although the purpose is altered, continuity remains a feature of Chinese history.

Most of the historical works written in China since the Revolution and translated into English are not the product of deep research or long reflection. Written by leading members of the Communist Party of China rather than by professional historians, they are devoted to justifying the Revolution and proving that Mao Tse-tung followed 'the correct line' through the last three decades. Practically all serious students of modern Chinese history would agree that sweeping and radical reforms were necessary in China and that the accumulation of shocking abuses was so considerable that some revolutionary change was required. But an explanation of the need for and the origins of the revolution, on the one hand, and of the success of the revolution, on the other, does not constitute a complete justification of the course followed by it throughout the years. Ernst Toller once said 'History is the propaganda of the victors' and, in a very real sense, this is true of most of the Chinese Communist pamphlets and general historical surveys. Thus, 'Mao Tse-tung on the Chinese Revolution', written in commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Communist Party's foundation by Chen Po-ta, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and concurrently Vice-President of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Peking and Vice-President of the Academia Sinica, is both an historical survey, laudatory of Mao, his leadership and his writings, and an appeal for action. Similarly, *From Yenan to Peking*, by Liao Kai-lung, and other short histories, now available in English, must be considered as 'the propaganda of the victors'.

Nevertheless, the importance of such works should not be minimized. In Chinese universities, teachers' colleges, and secondary schools, compulsory courses are given in 'political education', as distinct from and in addition to normal courses in history and social studies. In these compulsory courses, the two main subjects are dialectical materialism and the modern history of China, with special reference to the Chinese Revolution. 'The correct line' on these subjects as laid down by the Communist Party leaders is, of course, followed. It would not appeal to those history teachers who met at Unesco to discuss improvements in history textbooks, but it is the inevitable accompaniment of a successful revolution in a vast country. In addition, in view of the situation in Formosa, the

Chinese Communists say they are still at war, and being at war never favours expression of opinions contrary to government policy.

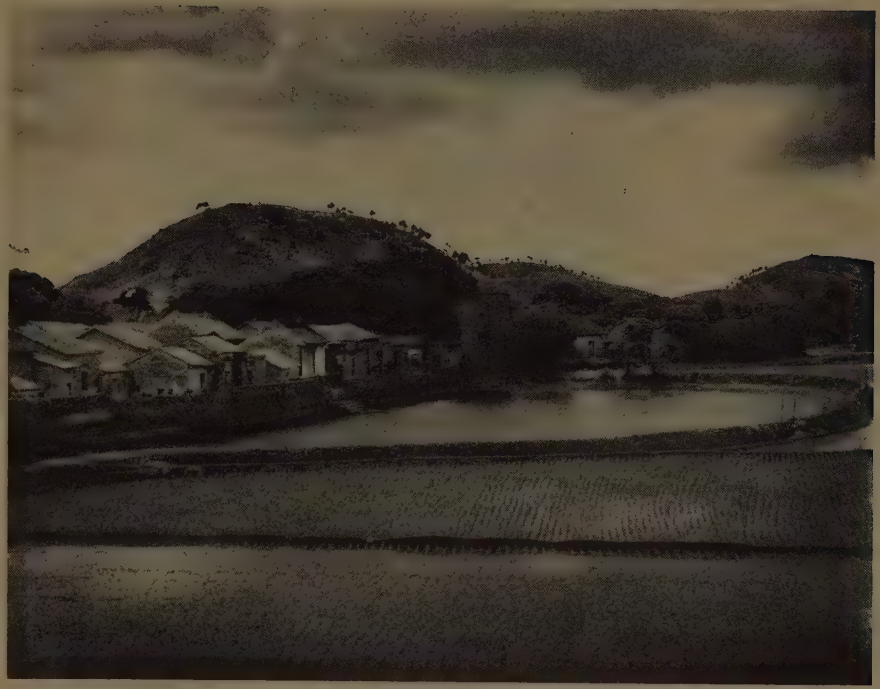
In view of the stress laid upon collective leadership, 'the Marxist-Leninist method of leadership, the Marxist-Leninist line of work', in communist writings the world over at this time (an authoritative editorial in the *People's Daily* for 5 April 1956, published in English in the *People's China* for April 1956, states, 'The cult of the individual is a foul carry-over from the long history of mankind'), it is interesting to note both its effect on communist historical writing and the quite definite direction on this subject given by Mao Tse-tung as long ago as May 1941. In an address, 'Reform our Study', given at a cadres' meeting, Mao said: 'As to the study of the Chinese history of the last hundred years, we should assemble all qualified persons to take up the work jointly but with a proper division of labour, and put an end to the state of affairs in which each goes his own way. Only after an analytic study of China's economic history, political history, military history and cultural history, can we make a synthetic study of her history as a whole.' I enquired how far this directive was being followed. One professor told me that he had formerly worked alone in both research and writing but now was happier working in a research team and producing a collective work. With the aid of others, he had recently written a history of modern China and had then circulated it for criticism and correction by over two hundred colleagues. This method of having a work checked by over two hundred potential critics will certainly allow Communist Party members to ensure that the work as finally published is on 'the correct line'. It thus has obvious advantages from the Party viewpoint, but it remains to be seen whether or not the resulting histories measure up to the claims of historical omniscience sometimes advanced by the Communists.

Chinese scholars have always had a great regard for the study of history, especially the history of their own country. Today, with the emphasis on industrial developments and on the material side generally, pride in country remains an important element in the national outlook. The Communists appeal to this national pride and many people, including some scholars, respond more to the reminder 'China is your Country!', 'Build a better stronger China!', than to appeals based on the class struggle. The Museum of Social Development in Peking and the Taiping Museum (or memorial to the Taiping Rising of last century) in Nanking both displayed a mixture of pride in the Chinese inventions and developments of the past and a conviction that the many peasants' rebellions in Chinese

Visitors to the Great Wall

PHOTOGRAPHS OF CHINA BY W. R. GEDDES

New quarters for army officers, seen from the old Winter Palace, Peking



Village in South China, showing the old landlord's tower

Breaking-up time in a Peking primary school. Face masks are often worn to guard against infection. The wall-picture shows Mao Tse-tung among children; similar pictures of him appear in every class-room.

history had failed because they lacked the leadership and organization supplied more recently by the Communist Party.

China may well be proud of her many cultural and artistic achievements in the past, and of some of her customs and traditions. For some of these, there is little room in the New China, but the People's Government is repairing, preserving and maintaining many ancient historical monuments, many picturesque and important national buildings. Consequently, visitors to China will never cease to be impressed by the sense of history and the pride in the past displayed by the Chinese. I shall always remain profoundly grateful for the opportunity I was given to see so much of both the Old and the New China. When Chou En-lai spoke to the New Zealand group, he quoted an old Chinese saying to the effect that a man who has no friends to advise and criticize him makes no progress. So far as the study and writing of history are concerned, I end on a word of advice. To close a nation's doors to the thought of the rest of the world is to shut out a stimulus to progress. This year Russia and the United States have arranged to admit, on reciprocal terms, one major information journal. I hope the Chinese will admit and study Western historical publications in under forty years. Marxists have no monopoly of the truth. The Chinese understanding of the West should not be limited to what they are told by the Communists—that is a mistake the Russians made for too long.

## CHINESE WRITERS James Bertram

WHAT IS the condition of writers, and of writing generally, in China today? Even a Chinese would have difficulty in giving a clear and coherent account. For wherever one tries to throw the emphasis, the picture comes out wrong. And this is hardly surprising, in a country where Mao Tse-tung—who writes classical poems oddly at variance with his precepts in the *Yenan Lectures on Art*—and Kuo Mo-ju—a formidable antiquarian who writes tense modern poems in the vernacular, often drawing on a foreign vocabulary—are both makers of national policy; and have both, presumably, approved plans for a modernization of the Chinese language that seems likely to cut off future generations abruptly from the whole classical tradition of the past.

Here—merely as a starting point—are some notes on a visit made with Alan Marshall, the Australian novelist and short-story

writer, to the headquarters of the Union of Chinese Writers in Peking last May. I can only regret that New Zealand, in this exchange of views, was so inadequately represented. Australia was luckier—as Alan Marshall is perhaps luckier than Frank Sargeson, in reaching a wider public with not dissimilar material and methods.

We were met at the gateway of an old-style Peking office by this year's Chairman of the Writers' Union, Mr Yang Sho[1]—a well-known Chinese novelist whose last book, with a Korean war setting, has been something of a best-seller. Mr Yang—tall, erect, decisive, an admirably competent spokesman—seemed quite at home in the severe blue uniform of civil officialdom. His companion, Mr Lee Wen Yuan, editor of the Chinese magazine *I-Wen* (*Foreign Literature*), was younger, plumper, untidier, and had an impish sense of humour—with no effort at all I could see him in a scholar's gown with crumpled sleeves. They led us through a couple of pleasant courtyards to a reception room hung with portraits of Mao Tse-tung, Gorky and Lu Hsun—a representative and by no means incongruous literary trinity. With three very capable women secretaries and interpreters, we settled down to a morning's conference.

We were asked first—as are most 'specialist' visitors to New China—to give some account of literary conditions in our own countries. Marshall did this very well indeed for Australia, to my enlightenment as well as our hosts': I did my best to outline the New Zealand scene. Common points of reference were Henry Lawson and Katherine Mansfield, who seem to be well-known in China. Both visitors agreed that New Zealand poetry at present was probably more varied and accomplished than Australian; that Australia has however much more flourishing, vigorous and self-confident work in prose; but that writing in both countries still suffers cramping effects from isolation, public indifference, and the unsatisfactory economics of publishing.

The Chinese were especially interested in details of such state assistance as is given to writers here, and in the economic and social position of writers. Political pressures, of the kind that have come into play with Australian writers like Judah Waten and Frank Hardy, did not seem to me so apparent in New Zealand. But we discovered a common concern with problems of the sort to which there does not seem to be any ready-made answer—such as

[1] No attempt has been made here to regularize the spelling of Chinese names.

the 'drying up' of a promising young writer after a single notable book.

Through all this discussion, Mr Lee made careful notes of every name as it was mentioned, and of many titles. Later, I was able to supply him with a fairly representative range of recent New Zealand writing and with marked back numbers of *Landfall*. It seems likely that some Sargeson stories, and a choice of other miscellaneous pieces, may before long be appearing in Chinese periodicals. I am quite sure that they will be carefully read and studied by someone; for this is no mere polite or dilettante interest, but part of a deliberate Chinese policy of putting contemporary Western literature under the microscope. It has probably been encouraged by such comments as Edmund Blunden's recently, in the Tokyo *Mainichi*: 'The national literature (in China) is in need of some invigoration and aeration from the sources which lately have not flowed noticeably into its channels.'

The renewal of Western contacts with China in the last year or so has undoubtedly been of great value. I would cite in particular the influence of so original and experienced a writer as the Danish playwright Kjeld Abell, whom I met on his second visit to China. A European mind as sensitive and distinguished as this, in critical interplay with Chinese artists and producers, cannot fail to make a considerable impression. And it seemed to me that in art, as in politics, the smaller democratic countries can at this moment make a particularly useful contribution to Chinese practice. (I may add here that the Association of Journalists in Peking, with whom I spent a most lively afternoon, showed a similar exhaustive interest in every detail of the operation of newspapers, radio and publishing in New Zealand.)

When Marshall and I were talked out, it was our turn to ask questions. 'The conditions you describe', Mr Yang commented, 'are not strange to us. Under the Kuomintang, Chinese writers lived precariously under many pressures, both political and economic. Now, a writer's living is guaranteed by our Union; and a Chinese writer has absolute freedom of creation.'

A raised eyebrow was enough to draw the immediate rider: 'Of course, for a deliberate reactionary like Hu Feng, there is no such guarantee.' No doubt we should have pursued this further, for the case of Hu Feng—widely ventilated in the Chinese press last year, and subsequently taken up abroad as a cautionary tale to illustrate what happens to a Chinese intellectual who questions any fundamental assumptions of Marxism and the Communist Party line—was certainly significant. I did not know the political

details; only that the offender had been summarily expelled from the Writers' Union, and removed from all his official posts. I was told later in China that the whole affair had been largely a clash of temperaments and personalities, and that criticism of Kuo Mo-ju as a dangerous 'dictator' in cultural matters was central to it. But the whole thing was close enough to similar cases in the art world of Soviet Russia to indicate that 'absolute freedom' needed some qualification.

We went on to discuss the Chinese practice of appointing writers to responsible official positions. Kuo Mo-ju, formerly a vice-Premier, is now vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of Council. Mao Tun, perhaps the leading novelist and prose-writer of China, has for some years been Minister of Culture. Lau Shaw is a representative of the People's Assembly, and vice-Chairman of the Union of Writers. This last is a short-term appointment: we were assured that there is a regular rotation of office in the control of the Writers' Union, on a basis of election by the writers themselves. But the obvious risks of the system were not denied.

'Because our Government was short of experienced men, it had to call on some writers who were known and respected to fill important posts. Not all writers are good administrators, and it is not their main job. Mao Tun has been a very good Minister of Culture, but he has written nothing substantial for years. Recently he has applied for long leave from official duties to devote himself to writing, and leave has been granted.' It should be added here that Mao Tun, whose *Autumn in the Village* clearly shows his affinity with the author of the superb seventeenth-century psychological novel, *Chin P'ing Mei*, had come under some public criticism, in the puritan atmosphere of New China, for his 'morbid' interest in sex. The parallel is interesting, since it is generally believed that *Chin P'ing Mei* was written anonymously by a Minister of Justice in the last years of the Ming Dynasty.

The Writers' Union, we were told, does its best to provide writers with the conditions they need to produce good work. Established writers, most of whom have an assured income from very generous royalties, are given subsidies and travel grants—though it is clear that more of them would appreciate the opportunity to travel abroad. Young writers of promise, wherever and however discovered, are aided with their higher education and supported by the Union until they can prove themselves. Yang Sho considered that the two most significant recent developments had been the growth of 'regional groups' of young writers, with strong local colouring, in all provinces of China except Tibet, and among

several national minorities; and a further group formed around the 'Advanced Writers' in Peking, who are frankly experimental.

Incomes are always hard to assess, though it must be remembered that the Chinese dollar, inside China, has a very firm buying power. We were told that an average, for a writer whose work was in any demand, was something like Ch$200 a month. A government minister gets about Ch$300, which may be regarded as a top-level official salary. Some industrialists and executives in China must of course have incomes far in excess of this; but so have best-selling writers. We were told that the young author of *Defence of Yenan* had made more than $70,000 in royalties from this one book; and Yang Sho said he had himself made more than $30,000 from his Korean novel. What all this boils down to, is that a full-time writer can usually count on a regular salary in the upper professional bracket. If he is lucky enough to hit the jackpot—and a topical political theme still seems the best bet—he may quite suddenly become a very wealthy man.

We had some further talk about significant themes, especially 'public' ones. What, I asked, was now thought of such a novel as Chou Li-po's *The Hurricane* (a laboriously detailed acount of land reform in a village in Heilungkiang—see *Landfall* 36, p.359). 'At the time, this novel was thought to be very good, because the subject was so important. Now we can see better the flaws in the treatment.' But it is clear that the documentation of recent Chinese history in fiction is still proceeding. New works praised to us dealt with such episodes as the Long March of the Red Armies; the 'War of Liberation' (much closer to the Chinese in every way than the war against Japan, and so much more dramatic than most of us—who imagine it was a walk-over—still suppose); the Korean war; industrialization and the current Five-year-plan.

'We are very glad', said Mr Yang, 'that some older writers, after long silence, are becoming active again.' He instanced the dramatist Tsao Yu, who has at length followed up his celebrated play *Storm* with a new full-length piece, significantly entitled *Clear Sky*. 'But we are really more interested in the new generation of writers. You will find many works by young writers in the bookshops—poetry, sketches, novels. But we do not think a young writer should be encouraged to turn too soon to literature alone. We think he should spend time in the villages, in the army, or in a factory—either as a worker or as a teacher. He must gain experience of life, to have something to write about. Knowledge of life is at least as important as technique.' When the Union was satisfied of the 'maturity' of a writer (and we had lengthy argu-

ment about the manner in which this could be assessed with any certainty) he was encouraged to become a full-time writer, and to follow his own bent.

There is little in my notes about Chinese poetry, which is once more in the melting pot. But it is hard to discuss it, when so many contradictory styles are in vogue. Kuo Mo-ju writes a free-verse poem on a Locomotive, and it is spread across three columns of a popular daily; a veteran like Liu Ya-tse still writes the old occasional pieces of personal compliment and feeling, and they are sent on scrolls to his friends (an autograph poem by Mao Tse-tung hangs on the wall of his home). I asked Lee Wen Yuan if much 'classical' verse was published; he said, very little. But primitive 'peasant poetry'—a return, in one sense, to the manner of the oldest surviving Chinese songs—is very popular indeed, and may bring fame to an unknown young boy in a remote village. The verse written by most intellectuals tries hard to be popular, and perhaps rather coarsens itself in the process—as Peking Opera, for me, has been coarsened by realistic scenery on a picture-frame stage, a concealed orchestra, and so forth. East and West are here at opposite poles. Mr T. S. Eliot yearns for an uneducated audience, and will never find it; the Chinese poet today, one suspects, would occasionally be glad to write just for himself.

Alan Marshall, who writes a good deal about children and is interested in purely 'lyrical' treatment of animals and natural subjects, was anxious to find how a subjective writer with no direct interest in politics or social affairs would be regarded in China. The answer was that such writers did exist, in both verse and prose, and were supported by the Union. But the degree of paternalism involved in the whole system might well prove restrictive, unless very sensitively handled. An encouraging sign, perhaps, was that a recent Conference of Young Writers in Peking had been most remarkable for the amount of disagreement it produced and provoked.

'What we dislike most in recent writing', said Yang Sho, 'are two tendencies—Formalism or Conceptionalism; and excessive Naturalism.' We did our best to pin down these formidable abstractions, with some success. 'Slogan-writing', 'writing to a formula', 'type characterization', the lifeless handling of a theme however useful the moral, were equally condemned. A list of particularly admired foreign models may throw some light here: we were given Dickens, Whitman, Balzac and Flaubert, Tolstoy and Chekhov, Pushkin and Mayakovsky. It sounds safe enough, if not very contemporary. But it was noticeable that at the international

Drama Conference held in Peking just before our arrival, it had been the Europeans who led the attack on 'Social Realism' as an outmoded and inadequate approach to literature.

Finally, there was the old debate about quantity versus quality. The demand for fresh material in periodicals and books, in drama and film and radio, is so overwhelming in China today that it must be very hard for editors and producers to insist on the highest standards. I talked, for instance, to a leading Chinese film director; and suggested he should ask for a free hand for a couple of years, in order to make a single Chinese film as good as the best of the post-war Japanese. He waved his arms excitedly and said there was nothing he would like better—but how were studios like his to meet the urgent demand for new films coming from all over the country, and most insistently from areas where people had never seen films before the last year or so? I must record here an impression (strongest of all, in such places as the Foreign Languages Press) that the Five-year-plan emphasis on production at all costs, on delivering the promised quota if possible ahead of time, often seems to be carried over from material things to the products of the mind, and of the artistic consciousness. It must be very hard indeed for a creative writer, who may most of all need a period of fallow inactivity, to appear to be idle when everyone around him is working flat out at some constructive job. Yet here the example of Mao Tun's long leave—especially it if produces good literary results—may prove to be something of a turning-point.

For the Chinese literary and artistic tradition, with its strong reliance on periods of solitary retirement alternating with periods of social living, is bound to reassert itself. Lu Hsun, by common consent the greatest modern Chinese writer, was a revolutionary force in Chinese art: yet to a western mind he seems a thoroughly Chinese writer, with much the same view of the world as Po Chü-i. Gorky or Brecht, in the same way, seem already to fit naturally enough into a clear Russian or German line of descent—the national characteristics are so much stronger than any political or aesthetic differentials. Perhaps it is safe to venture the guess that whatever the state asks its writers to do, and whatever it does to the language, Chinese writing in the future will not be so remarkably different from the best writing of the past. What is certain, however, is that it will have a very much wider audience.

ARTISTS in China are looking for new art forms and in this search they have adopted what the Russians call 'Socialist Realism'. This is nothing very new but is another name for the sentimental and somewhat pedestrian art popular in Victorian England. Landseer, Frith, Tissot and their brother Academicians did this sort of thing very well but of course it has been out of favour for a long time in Western Europe. It is more than probable that Socialist Realism was adopted in China because it has proved extremely popular in the Soviet Union. I am not sure that it is very popular in China and I know that artists there are not at all satisfied that it is what they are looking for.

Attempts to create a new art form in China follow centuries of highly developed art tradition which sets a very high standard, but also many problems. Although it was originally largely materialistic and humanist, art in China has for practically a millennium been largely restricted to a certain kind of landscape and flower painting. The word for 'landscape', 'Shan shui', means 'Mountain, water'. By restricting themselves to these subjects almost exclusively artists cut themselves off from commonplace and material things and devoted themselves to the contemplation of subjects with a deeper meaning. It should be remembered that in China artists were also poets, philosophers, men of letters and statesmen.

Mountains and water have an archaic symbolical significance in China which had nothing to do with, but was easily integrated with the contemplative religious ideas of Taoism, Buddhism and the life of hermits. Flowers and trees including bamboo also have symbolical meaning, and animals and birds included in these works of art are chiefly those associated with ancient symbolism. Portraiture, court scenes and the daily life of the village as well as the town and mythical subjects have all had an important place in Chinese art. Domestic animals, especially the horse, have also been popular but these subjects do not seem to have the same significance for the Chinese art connoisseur as landscape and flower painting.

This background to Chinese painting although it is of great interest and is highly valued in China today, renders traditional art out of character with the post-revolutionary era. It may also account in part for the fact that this art has gradually been losing vitality for a very long time. The decline of Chinese painting done in this traditional way has been accompanied by a growing interest in Western art. It is therefore not surprising that in searching for

a means of expression more in keeping with modern thought, and particularly communist ideology, a Western one should have been adopted. China is looking to the West for guidance in many things, medicine, education, industrial development, engineering, architecture and even dress; and this was so, of course, long before the communist régime.

The shortcomings of socialist art are not lost on Chinese artists who are very concerned about it. But at the moment it is clear that they do not know what else to do. Interest in classical art is booming in China now and galleries showing it to an endless stream of workers and peasants are opening in all the big cities. There is a reverent attitude towards it as there is towards classical opera and the old peasant arts and crafts. On a second visit to China recently I decided to stay as long as time allowed in the capital where I could meet artists, see them at work and perhaps do some work of my own in the Art Institute. All this was arranged for me immediately. I worked in a studio along with two or three students in the modelling department. It was the tail end of the term and work was slack because students were taking time off to study languages and other subjects for examinations. They wandered in and out and I talked to many of them with the help of those who understood a little English.

This department of the school was run on precisely the same lines as the average English art school of about thirty years ago. First year students worked from the same plaster casts, details of Michael Angelo's David, the head of the Hermes by Praxiteles, the Venus of Milo, Houdon's Voltaire and so on. In the life rooms there were plenty of models both in the nude and for portrait studies. Students were doing drawings, paintings and modelling and the equipment was the best and most plentiful I have seen in any school anywhere. The drawing was old fashioned, art school stuff, stippled and over-worked with little attempt at real draughtsmanship. The drawings were all the same size and all done the same way. They might have been the work of the same person at different times in his development. There was no attempt to make beautiful drawings, but conscientious and unimaginative studies of what my old master, Professor Henry Tonks, used unblushingly to call 'the human form divine'. Painting in this part of the school was rather less stereotyped and so was the modelling, but it was interesting to find that none of it had the slightest Oriental flavour.

I think that the aim is to produce works of art for the sole purpose of impressing a semi-illiterate people with the aims and ideals and the history of the revolution. But although it was

originally thought that this could best be done by the sort of painting and sculpture that goes by the name of 'Socialist Realism' in Russia, I do not think that this opinion is generally held in China today. For one thing it has been very severely criticized by many visitors to China who may be expected to know something about it. But on the other hand the teachers in this school and the one in Hangchow which I also visited, impressed me as being in favour of the communist régime. They would like to proclaim the victory over reaction and corruption in the way Rude proclaimed it in his sculptural group, 'La Marseillaise'. They would like to proclaim the heroic qualities of labour as was done by the Belgian sculpture Meunier, and the courage and nobility of mankind as Rodin expressed it in some of his bronzes. I noticed photographs of these works in the studios of the art schools. But the trouble is, of course, they do not possess a Rude, a Meunier or a Rodin.

We should not be justified in condemning socialist or any art because it has not yet produced any great artists unless we have good reason to think it never will produce them or will prevent artists in some way from doing their best work. Or if we know that such a school of thought does not allow artists to experiment in new modes of expression, which is so essential to all invention. I do not condemn the new art in China on any grounds except that it is derivative, it is deliberately modelled on what is foreign and so it lacks vitality and spontaneity. It is deadly dull. But it is never considered as being of value artistically—I saw none of this Socialist Realism hanging in any exhibition and I saw none of it in the art schools. But I assumed that students who were learning western techniques were being trained to do it. All the art of this sort I saw was hanging up in railway carriages, in offices, schools, and on notice boards. It was not even hanging in hotel rooms. It was being treated much as we treat posters.

I had many conversations with artists about this aspect of their work, both in the schools and in their private homes and at their place of work on the huge monument being erected in Peking. We talked about the theories of modern western art, symbolism, naturalism, humanism and so on. They told me that there were many comparable theories about Chinese painting.

'But that's all very fine,' said one of them turning to me abruptly, 'but what would you do if you were asked to make a statue of, say, a textile worker?'

I said I thought that many of their old masters of painting would have made a very good job of it, but I realized that they had no precedent for sculpture of that kind, for in China sculpture has

always been a very minor art. In fact, except for very early relief engraved on stone, it is hardly considered to be anything more than a craft. Several times I repeated my criticism that I thought they were making a mistake in looking to the west for methods of work and modes of expression. That they should go back to their own traditions and not model their work on ours. The artists I was talking to always agreed with me but they said it was extremely difficult, that the content and the manner of painting were too interwoven and that it was in fact this synthesis that made Chinese painting, at its best, what it was. I often felt that there was nothing I could tell them that they did not know a good deal better than I did, and that what I disliked about Socialist Realism they disliked quite as much.

'Even if that is true,' the sculptor Tsi T'u-chi said to me, 'we value and need to hear your opinions and are grateful to you for speaking frankly. If what you think coincides with what we think too, so much the better, it will give us confidence to act accordingly.'

The dilemma in which Chinese artists find themselves is really quite clear—they are in a tremendous hurry to do something that cannot be done in a hurry. It is clear that the sort of thing that interests intellectuals in the West is of no particular interest to them. Western art is a literary art hand in glove with advanced philosophical and psychological thinking, an art for an élite. It is often violent and brutal and is fundamentally a reflection of, and a comment on, western society which is not one that has just come through a socialist revolution. The Chinese have no desire to copy their own traditional art exclusively, and they are not satisfied that Socialist Realism, as it is produced in the U.S.S.R., is what they want. But they must do something—there is a great demand for works of art of all kinds and it is up to them to supply it. This is where pressure is most likely to be felt. Artists are employed by the state and if after a year or two they have produced nothing they will presumably have to answer for it, returning perhaps to teaching jobs or something of that sort. But however that may be, they are artists and they want to produce works of art.

Meanwhile there is a great deal being done and not enough artists to do all that is wanted. The art schools are full of students drawn from all over China doing three or four-year courses. Fourth year students are busy on commissioned work and so are the teachers. In special workshops attached to the school in Hangchow, peasant craftsmen have been gathered together and given *carte blanche* to do anything they choose. They are provided with materials, jade

and other semi-precious stone, box wood and ginko-wood for carving. They spend as long as they like over their work which is bought by the Art Institute for use in exhibitions. These craftsmen are very skilful indeed. When I saw their work it was largely traditional in subject as well as in style but some new ideas were being tried out, perhaps a little hesitatingly.

In a separate department the old techniques of painting in ink and water-colour on silk and paper are being taught by masters of the art. There is a large number of students of the woodcut and many crafts are being carried on in the schools including printing of fabric, pottery and so on. There is a good deal of oil painting done but the Chinese do not seem to be very happy with this medium. It was of course never used in China until it was introduced by Europeans very recently, and they do not seem to have mastered it as Indian artists have.

Great efforts seem to have been made to create an atmosphere in which the arts will flourish. Art schools are all free and allowances are given to poor but gifted students to allow them to take an art course. Artists are in the higher income group and I think no one, except perhaps writers and poets, enjoys so much honour. Artists of standing are frequently given a salary and told to continue working at their art, or they may be attached to a school of art where they put in a few hours teaching in the week and do their own work for the rest of the time. I know one painter who is working on his own and was getting worried because he had been two years over the preliminary work for a silk painting for which the Art Institute had provided all the material and equipment. He thought he ought to have got on faster, but he told me that nobody else seemed to think so, and that he had been told not to worry. 'I keep asking the professor to come and see how I am getting on, but he does not bother to come. However he has promised to come soon.'

I felt the anxiety to get work done was the chief worry artists in China have to contend with—and of course their own limitations which is the trouble of all artists everywhere. What they do and how they do it seems to be their own concern.

25 April. Canton. Last night we were taken to the opera. Very westernized—all about a national heroine in the occupation. The theatre bigger than the Albert Hall, holds five thousand people. The singing was lovely—and the orchestra very good indeed, but the music half-pie. The company was a Peking one, and some lovely creatures in it. The singing sounded slightly French in production. As clear as a bell, with a nasal sound. Production of the opera very like second-rate Covent Garden, but with some wonderful grouping and chorus work now and then that brought it up.

26 April. Left Canton last night at 11 p.m. All day and all night in train, sleepers and restaurant car.

27 April. Still in train. Cold now, arrive in Peking 5 p.m. today. Passed through limitless plain, middle China—vast—yet everywhere peasants tilling the fields with donkeys turning the wheels for water. Hundreds of workmen making roads and bridges, all waving to us and all beaming. As we waved at one place, they all waved back, and called out in Chinese, 'They're friends'. We crossed the Yangtze at dawn about 4 a.m., leaving the train and crossing in the ferry. The new bridge piles were in and lit up by lights in the water. It was a huge version of Whistler's 'Battersea Bridge'. The river is enormous with a huge swell like the sea.

28 April. Peking. We arrived yesterday and were met with the warmest welcome, and lovely bouquets, carnations, irises and lilies, and were driven to this most comfortable hotel in the legation quarter. The usual time for bath and rest, with tea and fruit in each bedroom. Rewi Alley was there to meet us, and after all this, there was just time for a wander round to look at bazaars and markets and streets and people. It is more beautiful than Paris, of which it sometimes reminds me. It has that same silvery light. And the streets stretch away under tunnels of trees, just beginning to show their spring green, so that you see endless vistas through a mist of silver and green, with gateways opening into courtyards, and these lovely buildings and walls. And white lilac and heliotrope burgeoning everywhere. I could stay for years and paint and paint.

We were given a banquet at 7 p.m. when we met a lot more of the officials, and were taken to see a local opera from Hopei, with one of their famous actresses. The singing again superb—superb technique. Most of their notes have a little sliding note

before. Their control of slow, slow gesture and movement, their incredible miming.

4 May. Next day we were taken to the big dagoba in Hopei Park, and all that Sacheverell Sitwell says is true and more. I am delighted, and looking forward to painting, perhaps on Monday. Margaret Garland and I have been asked to stay a fortnight longer which is marvellous for me, for my paints can dry. The only paints available here are Russian alas and I suspect them a bit but nevertheless I shall begin.

On Sunday night we were entertained at Peking's crack restaurant by the President of something or other. The restaurant an old Chinese house of the upper class I should say. An epic meal which went on for hours. I was next to the President (I'm sure, on account of my white hair), who served me, and kept up a running conversation of amusing nothings peppered with a few very searching questions on conditions and modes of painting of the present day. They know everything, these people. Their finesse just makes one feel uncouth to a degree.

Yesterday morning we were taken out to the Summer Palace about thirty miles outside the city. We drove about a mile between two big stone walls, with the most entrancing gardens and trees on the other side. The trees here have to be seen to be believed. They are far more cared for and loved and pruned and cured than you would think possible. They are treated like human beings, and are centuries old. The people go to extraordinary lengths rather than cut them down. The Summer Palace has a collection of beautiful ceramics, paintings, tapestry, carving, ivory, jade, carpets, skins, inlays of every precious thing one could think of, and this glorious yellow and gold that seems to be diffused through it all. And in amongst these, the vulgar and tasteless gifts from the English and the French. Frightful épergnes in coloured glass and gilt, and terrible jardinières, and even the crystal chandeliers that we admired so much in England looked completely out of place beside their lovely delicate and fragile lanterns. You would walk into some immense hall, and get a glimpse through an open door of a series of small rooms, rather like the open doors of the Trento Palace, and on the kangs, gold and yellow cushions, and the carved tea table. The colours are superb. A wonderful rich blue in one room, and silvery gold and yellow in the room beyond. Enormous dishes about three feet across on carved stands. A burnt mustard yellow with green and black dragons and piled up with citrus fruits. They seem to arrange the whole place. Buildings, gardens,

lake, and pavilions, trees and parks, as a whole to compose, from whichever point of view you like to take. Wherever one looks, there are vistas. Even from the ground up, looking at the sky through trees, with temples and pavilions high up over one. There is no grass under the trees. The earth is a light copper colour, rather muted, and looks, together with the trees, as though all were most lovingly tended. And everything wreathed together with this most delicate green.

We all went to the official stand for May Day celebrations. Imagine a procession, close on a million people. The roar of acclamation as they passed the President so continuous and so loud, that the eardrums started doing things. Every nationality under the sun. I must say that the most beautiful exotic fascinating and sinuous creature in the whole gathering was Madame Nam Baba from the Ivory Coast. In fact a sort of Helen of Troy. I could imagine the whole race in trousers just going down like ninepins. Over six feet tall—magnificence combined with the most fatal charm imaginable. And with such a sense of theatre. She made all the rest of us look like dried-up bits of pale blue tissue paper.

7 May. Yesterday we left about 9 a.m. for the Great Wall, and drove through lovely country right up into the hills, and through an ancient gorge and pass. Spring flowers out everywhere. Little clusters of blue violets, yellow daisies, a sort of phlox, and cyclamen. With a lovely white starry shrub burgeoning away on the hillsides under pink peach trees, and beautiful golden bronze-tipped walnuts everywhere just springing into leaf. Oaks and a sort of chestnut. You cannot imagine the beauty of all this tender green laced with the blossoming trees and flowers, and the stark rugged country, gigantic rocks, exactly the precipitous rocks and cliffs in their paintings. And the groups of workmen in their dark cobalt clothes making the new road, and all looking up and waving as we passed. Eventually we reached the Wall. I have never seen any bit of country or masonry look as old as this. All the histories one has read, all the stories of Genghiz Khan, and the poems, here they all breathe and come alive. The place is saturated in atmosphere. It is strange to stand on the Wall, on those huge slabs of stone, with the immensity of the landscape all around. Rather like that one sees from the top of Ben Lomond, but many times magnified, range after range of blue mountains stretching away in an endless vista with that ancient wall disappearing over the summits, leaping into view again miles ahead, and tiny figures of people in their richer, darker blue clothes. I have never been touched before by

such a consciousness of ancient civilization. Do you remember some translation, once, in a book you brought home—I think perhaps Arthur Waley—some touching poems by a woman who went to the Wall to find her husband, and who cried that now they had cast his bones into the foundations there was nothing left for her, and they might have hers as well. All those things came back to me so vividly. The stone itself is the most lovely warm honey colour, in that blue and white landscape. I made a quick pencil sketch on the back of Angus's lunch box, but bless you, they are giving me a car for the day, and I go back and paint it.

On the way back we made a detour to the Ming Tombs. A most beautiful wide valley surrounded by precipitous hills—and of all the still peaceful spots, they have chosen the most lovely for their tombs. The whole place bathed in a warm diffused sunlight. A sort of golden silence. The buildings themselves I think the rightest I have yet seen. Nothing too much or under-played, and the dignity of proportion. The famous avenue of animals and guardians I found quite amusing, but the place itself when you get inside just touches something in me that has never responded to anything before. And how they plant and grow their trees, all within the general design. It is a completely new order of beauty and harmony to me. We came back to Peking at a breakneck speed, knocking over a man on a bicycle in the city, doing about forty miles an hour. It seems to be a point of honour with these drivers to get in first to the hotel.

10 May. I had one of the most interesting mornings yet, at the Institute of Research in Music. Their collection of musical instruments, an enormous range of them, goes right back two thousand years and more. One of their top professors came in and was introduced, and with a quiet sort of ceremony sat down to a large lute-like instrument on a table, and played us a piece of music twelve hundred years old. Water flowing down a river, and there was Debussy's inspiration, almost note for note, and much more. And this music had remained in one family till about fifty years ago. They attached such importance to their scores that no one but their own musicians was allowed to play them. All the manuscripts, rubbings, photographs and lovely paintings—a veritable museum, an enormous building of it, with half the staff away in the country noting down material. This has nothing to do with the Conservatorium. I should imagine that the whole study of music here is a much bigger thing than in London. They have a symphony orchestra which I have not yet heard, but they hear

Bartok along with music from all the outlying countries and districts. And one of their folk-songs, which you hear in every nook and cranny, is extraordinarily like a simple Bartok tune you do on the piano.

I don't know if I have enough money to buy a lute, but I shall buy a lot of reproductions of the Tun Huang cave murals. The reproductions are copies made by famous artists. Sometimes they are better than the originals. There is a whole history of a nation's music, together with their religion, in these paintings. Here are the forerunners of Picasso, Matisse, Dufy, Gauguin, Hitchens—all the French school, primitives as well. Nothing new under the sun!

Peking opera last night, a gala performance by invitation only, with Mei Lan-fang, their oldest and most honoured actor. A sort of Sir Henry Irving, sixty-two years old, and impersonating a woman. 'The Royal Concubine inebriate.' One simply cannot imagine a more fragile feminine performance. And the voice an extraordinary mellow high falsetto, yet conveying the feeling of anticipation, disappointment and finally despair, and such economy of gesture, yet each gesture fraught with the quintessence of meaning. It is quite true, all one has read in their poems about hands like falling petals from flowers. Their whole figures almost waver and tremble like fragile flowers in front of one's eyes, and when they leave the stage, for all the world they are gentle zephyrs being wafted out and away. There were three operas this night. The first one, a fight between generals. Full of colour—costumes and banners —a terrific whirling movement. The stage deafening with clang and the most amazing dance and acrobatics. One felt swept up in a maelstrom of fighting and pageant. The second one, of a wayfarer and fugitive taking refuge in an inn on an isolated road, and the innkeepers stealing in at night to rob and kill. The fight in the dark that ensued.

How one eats! A plate of sweets has just come in to me now, straight out of the Arabian nights, a fly-away sort of marzipan of ground walnuts inside a shell of the thinnest caramel possible. There is always in one's bedroom a plate of fruit or one of biscuits; and by biscuits I mean the most airy confection of ground nuts and cinnamon and flour like nothing I have tasted before. And as soon as one comes in from excursions, they invariably bring in tea.

Tomorrow I go out to the Ming Tombs again to paint.

THE Chinese today date everything as having occurred 'before liberation' or 'since liberation', referring of course to the establishment of the Communist Government—or Chinese People's Republic—in 1949. Ostensibly the reference is no doubt to liberation from Kuomintang oppression, but there were clearly a host of other insults and injuries from which they felt they were also freed. Not least of these were the 'unequal treaties' and the colonial subjection into which they were forced by Western powers in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the paradoxical situation is that the communist revolution has deliberately imposed a European imprint on the Chinese civilization. The present goal is to convert China into a modern industrial state, based on the new political system to which nineteenth-century capitalism gave birth.

The distinctive feature of the revolution has been to substitute a communist Russian pattern for a capitalist Western one. And because China has, since liberation, also been cut off from the West (partly because of Western policy and partly because of Chinese), her present industrial development is made possible only by the assistance of Russia, and Russia's satellites. The mountains and deserts to the North and West are now the channels of communication through which run the new railways, and the Great Wall has become an historical curiosity. Russian influence and Russian technicians are everywhere to be seen, and the Chinese appear to take as much pride in the new Russian methods and techniques they are employing as in their own achievements. Like the Russians, the Chinese are making considerable present sacrifices in order to build up their heavy industry, and the same sort of incentives are offered as by the Russians. The social policies of the two nations are the same, and the new puritanism is as conspicuous in China as in Russia. Official art follows identical and equally dreary patterns in both countries. Portraits of Sun Yat-sen and Mao Tse-tung occupied the places of honour in the Tien An Men Square in Peking on May Day, but the German and Russian prophets of the new order, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, were there too.

I do not know how much emphasis is now given in Chinese political history to the doctrinal differences which developed in the twenties between Chinese and Stalinist communist theory, but I hardly suppose the Chinese communists have altogether forgotten that throughout their long civil war they received no help at all from their Russian comrades. In part, too, the equipment which the Russians are now supplying merely replaces that which they

carried away at the end of the Japanese war. But these things are not mentioned to visitors, and one hears nothing but appreciation of the help extended by the Soviet Union.

Nevertheless, I would be inclined to accept the reported disclosure by Krushchev (not mentioned in the version of his speech circulated abroad) that the original terms laid down by Stalin for aid to China were such that a breach nearly occurred between the two communist governments. (One is here reminded of the original terms for the first American loan to Britain after the war.) Mao has said that 'Russian history has created the Russian system . . . Chinese history will create the Chinese system'. In his interview with our New Zealand party Chou En-lai indicated that he would welcome many more foreign technicians, and said in so many words that he would be glad to have the help of New Zealand agricultural experts. He did not say that he wanted to counteract the present predominance of Russian technical aid, but I myself suspected that this might be an underlying motive.

Naturally there were in Peking for May Day many more delegations from Russia and Eastern European countries than from the rest of the world, but we were all, including even the Japanese, treated with the same unfailing Chinese courtesy. The Russians, like Chinese 'model workers' and other heroes of the revolution, were much bemedalled, but they appeared otherwise to be no less foreign than ourselves. Indeed, they appeared to isolate themselves much more than the rest of us, and despite Moscow's new look they displayed none of the warm friendliness of Indonesians, Indians and Western Europeans. How they behave towards their Chinese colleagues in factories, in the army and on joint organizations I have no idea, but they mostly live within their own communities, in buildings and quarters set aside for them—as Westerners did in the past. The difference, one assumes, is that Westerners imposed their own exclusiveness on China; the Chinese today may not be unwilling to keep their Russian colleagues in their place.

All this, I admit, is mainly supposition, based on the most slender of evidence. The facts are in any case impossible to obtain, unless one is a Russian or a Chinese. But certain noticeable differences between China today and the Russia of the past twenty-five years are there for all to see, and my own specific interest in China was to compare what I saw in Peking in 1956 with what I had observed in Moscow in 1939. The first and most obvious contrast is that contacts between Chinese and foreigners are possible to a degree that has been out of the question in Russia at least since the purges of the thirties. Armed guards are much less conspicuous in China,

and the role of the security police much less obvious. Mao's portrait has its place of honour in public buildings, schools and similar places, but the cult of the individual does not compare with that of the Russia of Stalin's day. The position of Christian churches in both countries is somewhat ambiguous, but on the face of it there is more tolerance in China for minority opinion (provided of course that it accepts the basic communist doctrines) than has usually been the case in Russia. And it seemed entirely proper that our host at the formal banquet given to the New Zealanders in Peking should have taken the text for his welcoming speech from Confucius. It was also agreeable to find that our Chinese guides treated us as human beings and not merely as a rabble to be organized into teams to visit factories, hospitals, crèches and anti-religious museums. Perhaps rather more to the point was my observation that the Chinese responded to their own propaganda in a normally human way. There must, clearly, have been a concerted attack on flies (rats, mosquitoes and sparrows are the other three of the 'four evils' to be destroyed), nor are there any beggars or prostitutes to be seen. But I am thinking of the reactions to the campaigns for hygiene and physical fitness. Morning exercises are undertaken in groups, individually, or not at all, and no one seems to mind either way. Muslin face masks (said to have been introduced by the Japanese) are normally worn by those who serve food (presumably there is compulsion here), but by others, including soldiers, apparently according to personal preference, or susceptibility to catarrhal infection. And if these worthy practices are indulged in, as one suspects, mainly by the élite, this large group do not betray any of the arrogance that characterized the young Nazis and Fascists of Germany and Italy.

My personal impression then was that there is a far greater degree of ease and easiness in China than I recollected in my encounters with totalitarian countries elsewhere. The question is whether this quality, which I assume to be essentially Chinese, will increase or diminish with the years.

In a totalitarian society nothing is altogether immune from political implications. But in China there appear to be a number of matters on the fringe of politics on which discussion and diversity of opinion, whether encouraged or not, at least persist. These discussions run parallel to similar debates in Russia and her Eastern European satellites, but the conclusions are not necessarily the same, and there is a clear difference between China and the rest. Up to now (and even under the new dispensation), the degree of freedom in the communist countries of the West, and the de-

cision as to whether there is any freedom or not, is determined by the Kremlin. When the Kremlin turns, everyone turns—and in the same direction. But this does not necessarily apply to China. It is not merely that the Russians cannot compel Chinese conformity; the significant fact is that the Chinese, despite their protestations of loyalty, tend to work out their own solutions to their own problems. One certainly has the impression that they have in a number of fields been more successful than the Russians, and achieved their goals much more quickly and with less friction. Perhaps it is, as they tend to suggest, that they have learnt from Russian mistakes; but if so it is none the less remarkable, or unusual.

To my mind their most striking achievement has been in their handling of the peasants. To have transformed nearly all the peasant holdings into co-operative farms in the course of a few years and with no signs of serious disruption that we could see, is an astonishing feat, however it was accomplished. The genius of the Chinese people for co-operative or community work was no doubt a contributing factor, and the success of the communists presumably lay in their ability to adapt Chinese ways to communist needs, as well as communist doctrine to the Chinese situation.

One is perhaps, after Russian experience, a little sceptical of boasts that 'national minorities' achieve freedom and cultural independence under communism. China's relations with Tibet will be the real testing ground of Chinese skill in handling an alien people. It seemed to us, however, that real efforts were being made to bring the minority groups into the communist society without suppressing their distinctive racial and traditional ways. We certainly had visual evidence, in the graves of the peasant ancestors still cluttering up the fields of China, that the communists do not ride roughshod over the susceptibilities of their people.

Rather more on the fringe of direct communist doctrine, but at the core of the question of liberty under communism, and of the degree to which the whole of life in China is patterned on Russia, is the state of the arts and architecture, literature and music. When we praised Peking opera, Chou En-lai retorted that opera would not give China technical skill or heavy industry. The culture that China needed today, he said, was scientific, and this is the overwhelming bias of higher education. But the old crafts continue, even if most of their products are exported to pay for machinery, and the monuments of China's past are being most carefully tended and preserved. Contemporary Russian architecture, in the shape of

the huge Russian exhibition buildings, seemed most out of place in the Chinese setting. Official statues and portraits may all be executed in the manner of 'socialist realism', but Chi Pai-shih, the contemporary artist who appeared to enjoy the greatest popularity, is uninfluenced by it. If any foreign element had entered into his essentially Chinese style it was Western impressionism. Chinese architecture itself appears to be in a state of flux, wavering between bare blocks of flats and heavily ornate imitations of ancient temples. But the best, of which we saw much, had succeeded in achieving a most agreeable harmony between modern materials and Chinese fantasy.

I couldn't help thinking that if the Chinese can mould ferro-concrete to their own distinctive pattern and taste, they should be able to do so even with Stalinist doctrine.

LAWRENCE CONSTABLE

# *Controversy on the Air*

To A New Zealander perhaps the most striking thing about broadcasting in Britain is its free expression of opinion. What music is to one group of producers, the day-to-day news is to others.

Does the team agree with Mr Dulles that there is no crisis in the Middle East? Mr Dulles, answers one of the panel firmly, was born with a silver foot in his mouth. A woman member is asked her opinion of the recent strike over who will drill holes in a northern shipyard. Her reply: 'Just about the silliest, most un-adult strike ever engaged in by British workmen.' The programme is a spontaneous discussion of questions put by an audience. No script; no recording beforehand; the programme is broadcast 'live'.

Nor is 'Any Questions' an only child. In 'Something to Say' each of four speakers contributes a topic of his own choosing and thrashes it out with the others. The M.C.C. has ragged an umpire in Pakistan: is there a danger that too much international sport may lose more friends than it makes? Violence is reported from Montgomery, Alabama: but how would Britishers react if coloured folk outnumbered them three-to-one?

Apart from daily commentaries—the leader-writers of radio, in

effect, broadcasting under their own names—other programmes introduce figures and issues currently in the news. A cabinet minister may be questioned by a newsman in the light of some development at home or abroad, and spokesmen for employers and labour discuss their differences in a current dispute.

These programmes and many others—'Eye Witness', 'Topic for Tonight', 'Christian Forum', 'Radio Link'—enable broadcasting to make a significant contribution to public thinking on current affairs. The listener is entertained, informed, and—whether he knows it or not—challenged by opinions diverse enough to help him shape an opinion of his own. To many a New Zealander visiting Britain, the wonder is that so little comparable vitality informs the programmes he is used to at home.

What does the N.Z.B.S. offer? One World Affairs talk a week (on Saturday nights, when many people are out), and perhaps three dozen studio discussions a year, chiefly in the winter 'Questionmark' series, all carefully recorded in advance. It is a programme of opinion so modest as to cost less than £1000 a year in fees. We have no audience participation, no panels, no forums, no brains trusts, and little comment on home affairs apart from those formal occasions when Ministers of the Crown invite themselves to speak. Something vital appears to be missing from New Zealand radio. There is little to identify it with its listeners. Scripted talks are generous in number, but there is no real clash of opinion, and almost no opportunity to hear what other people *think*.

Why is this? It is true that New Zealand lacks the resources for a flow of topical or controversial programmes to compare with the B.B.C. We have neither enough money (the juggernaut of National Orchestra financing sees to that) nor enough experts or plain good broadcasters in our much smaller country. But—and of this there can be no doubt—more could be done to develop them. We lack comedy because comedians cannot be manufactured. The same cannot be said of opinions. New Zealanders have plenty, and if some of them are wrong-headed, nothing is lost by exposing them to argument. N.Z.B.S. producers are not lacking in the imagination or the know-how to do this. What they lack is the freedom.

Look again for a moment at the B.B.C. It is a public corporation, established by Royal Charter and governed by a board of men chosen for their ability and distinction in public life. They are not politicians; the B.B.C. is not run *by* the government, but for it. Its impartiality, in fact, springs from its freedom from direct government control.

The B.B.C. has no politics: the N.Z.B.S., by whatever yardstick

it seeks to establish its impartiality, can hardly make the same claim. It is answerable, through a director appointed by the government, directly to a Minister; a Minister who, however conscientious, is primarily a politician, subject to all the pressures of expedience.

This is not to suggest that the Minister of Broadcasting makes a practice of saying what may or may not be broadcast. But the power is there if and when he cares to exercise it. It goes with the ultimate responsibility. The Minister is answerable to parliament as a whole for everything from a policy decision to a love lyric in the breakfast session, everything in fact that the Service allows on the air. He may at any time rule against a broadcast to which he—or a colleague, or a colleague's constituents, or a mere noisy section of them—takes exception.

But direct interference, however rarely exercised, is still not the issue. It is the constant fear of its being exercised that does the real harm. Under these circumstances the tendency is to tackle controversy only with a barge-pole. Discussion is frustrated on anything likely to excite strong feelings. Subjects are rejected as 'too risky just now', or 'liable to embarrass the Minister', or 'they might put the government on the spot', or even 'we'd be called communists if we talked about that'.

Of its very nature the N.Z.B.S. lives in a climate of caution that is death to much in the way of frank exchange of opinion. There are too many unwritten taboos. The door is closed to some of the liveliest possibilities in broadcasting.

The effect of this self-censorship is more widely felt than one might imagine. It robs discussion of its sting, discourages the venturesome, and puts a premium on narrow-mindedness out of all keeping with its prevalence. It undermines the value of notable broadcasts that do take place. And it discourages many best qualified to be heard. When his chance comes, many a potential speaker excuses himself on the score that he may risk giving offence. There is no tradition of people being encouraged to speak their minds.

This, I believe, is why the N.Z.B.S. has so few outlets for discussion, difference of opinion and exchange of ideas. The system is not dynamic; it has not encouraged their growth. Shortage of talent and shortage of money are only incidental to the real reason: fear of political repercussions. With a history of political skulduggery dating from the unmentionable heyday of 'Uncle Scrim', broadcasting in New Zealand has never been able to win the confidence of its public as have other state broadcasting bodies with a tradition of independence.

It has been said that just as a country gets the kind of government it deserves, so the N.Z.B.S. reflects the temper of New Zealanders as a whole. This presupposes its shortcomings to be an effect and not a cause. It could as readily be argued that New Zealanders, remote from the contrast and competition offered by stations in other lands, owe much of their state of mind to the soporific effect of what broadcasting is and fails to be today. Inasmuch as radio is one of the most important media of an informed public opinion, it is shaping national attitudes at least as much as it reflects them.

It is doubtful whether monopoly by a government department will ever admit a solution to the problem. Monopoly may, in fact, be an economic necessity; but as other countries have proved, it can assume forms less open to abuse, less shy of serving as a forum for beliefs, opinions and ideas, less subject to the forces of uncritical indignation. The B.B.C. offers only one such example. In the shadow cast by television, and perhaps even strengthened by it, sound radio has preserved and cultivated its reputation as just such a forum. With its board of governors and advisory councils, one for each region, it answers not to a Minister, but to parliament as a whole. One element of authority checks the other. There are no autocratic decisions. There is a world of difference between that and a chain of command that leads back into the shadowy hinterland of politics.

As a monopoly the N.Z.B.S. has a responsibility which it must be the first to recognize: to give the freest expression possible to all facets of national opinion. It has done a lot for the arts, and sport is eternally in its debt. But in the freedom to talk about ourselves and our relationship to the world around us, it has shirked its responsibility too long. Broadcasting of parliament has been made the excuse for avoiding controversy in other forms. That so many follow these often abject debates is a token of the need the everyday programmes are failing to satisfy.

That forces of isolation, narrow-mindedness and complacency affect our national life few would seek to deny. Broadcasting need do no more than make them defend themselves. Whether it will or can while it remains so politically vulnerable is another matter.

BRUCE MASON

# *A Year of Unity Theatre*

WHEN I recounted the history of Unity Theatre's first thirteen years (*Landfall*, June 1955), my prognostications for the future were gloomy. The vitality of the group, I felt, was leaking away; what would become of it, what path it would follow, was, I considered, anybody's guess. Since then, Unity has confounded my gloom by a year remarkable for its vitality and enterprise. It began with a public production of *The Needlewomen*, by Murray Gittos, of Auckland, which seemed to confirm everything I had predicted. The play, I am compelled to think, was very bad, with very little dramatic substance; the production and acting lacked conviction, and that vitality, which, if all else fails, Unity audiences can usually rely on. The play asked enormous things of a small group; many changes of scene, including one on the main deck of a ship in the 1840's, and the author's uncompromisingly Marxist view of his situation inhibited the generation of any dramatic tension or emotional involvement. It was followed in June 1955, by a respectable production of Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba*, acted in an aseptic, yet evocative set, and a reasonably competent cast conveyed some, but by no means all of the great climaxes of this deeply tragic play. But it was an advance. Unity was holding its own. Finally, in November, Saroyan's *The Time of Your Life* was staged at the Concert Chamber. It proved to be the society's most considerable achievement since *Death of a Salesman* in 1953. There were twenty-six in the cast, all competent, and one of them gave a really first-rate performance, but the excellence of the evening did not depend so much on acting as on the power of the production to generate atmosphere and creative feeling. The play has outwardly little dramatic substance in the accepted sense; no plot, no scenes, no formal dramatic progression; its movement, its elusive rhythm is subtle and evanescent, and it is a tribute to the gifts of the producer, Miss Nola Miller, that the essence of this rhythm was sought, found and maintained throughout its short run. It was a most warming evening, with an authentic sense of style appropriate to the San Francisco waterfront, and by no means out of place here. In March 1956, Unity kicked off the amateur season by presenting Arthur Miller's grim play, *The Crucible*. Although I cannot regard this play very highly, since it is the work of a man

seduced by an idea, a theme, a parallel, rather than by characters, 'the human situation' rather than human beings, it has an impressive second act, which Unity made vigorous and tingling by sheer conviction. Except for three performances, Unity's actors were below their best, and Miss Margaret Walker, producer, was also perhaps, not quite on form. She was hampered by a dreadful first act, full of amateurish contrivances which one would not have expected from the author of *Death of a Salesman*, and she was mistaken, to my feeling, in removing the play from a specific, to a semi-abstract milieu, a 'timeless' setting. This play is New England Puritanism in the late seventeenth century, or it is nothing. The parallel struck between the Salem witch-hunt and the activities of the Un-American Affairs Committee on which the author reputedly based his play, is discernible only at certain points, and the play is strained between what actually happened at Salem, Massachusetts, and the extent to which it could be related to Senator McCarthy's latest vendetta. I cannot regard *The Crucible* as an advance on Unity's previous productions, nor even quite up to its best, and some of the minor parts had pretty rough handling. But it had vitality, it moved, it drew one into it, it was worth seeing, and this is saying a good deal. So much for Unity's activities in public.

What I regard as the most important side of its activity took place at Drummond Street. Here Unity has an old house, converted into a *teatro da camera*, the only one, so far as I know, in Wellington. The milieu is squalid, appropriately so for intimate theatres, and the raked auditorium holds forty people comfortably, sixty squashed, and eighty-five, as it did once, in a Black Hole rigidity. The stage is about eight feet square, no more; it has no wings, and only one opening into a kitchen. On this tiny area, miracles of *trompe l'oeil* and inspired improvisation have been achieved. Three productions have been presented there since I last wrote. The first was *Thirty Pieces of Silver*, by Howard Fast, the kind of play Unity is expected to produce by its mildly hostile denigrators in other societies. It is an infantile 'social sig.' play (for an explanation of this term, see my previous article) which treats of corruption in Washington, racial prejudice, and the activities of 'investigators'. There was only one character who seemed alive. The production showed however, what might be achieved on a tiny stage, which suggested most ingeniously the spacious interior of a senior civil servant's flat in Washington, and one became conscious of how closely one could identify oneself with an action, so immediate and irresistibly penetrating was it at such close quarters. A pro-

duction at Unity's studio has the immediacy and seductive authority of a cinema close-up; not a gesture, not the flicker of an eyelid can be missed when the farthest seat is only twenty feet from the stage. The second production was John Whiting's play *Marching Song*, mounted with considerable elegance and ingenuity, a play which seemed to discuss the relationships between power, love and virtue, but of whose final worth I remain uncertain. Again, the intimacy of the little theatre was an enormous help to the play; absorbed in it, undistracted by noise or intervening space, one could allow it to work unhindered on the imagination. Finally, very recently, Unity has shown its members Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, which I think the high-water mark of their achievement in intimate theatre. Somehow, the tiny set represented a spacious house furnished with a rich sombreness. Three rooms were visible, including a living room with French doors leading to a garden, a kind of mezzanine for the gentlemen to retire to, and a curved entrance hall leading to an outer door. The costumes were superbly elegant and stylish, and the test of the whole occasion was that this greatly hallowed and to me, somewhat overrated play, could live and move in these surroundings. Not all the stops could be used, for Unity's tiny studio is no place for violence or passion, and it is no criticism of the gifted actress playing Hedda to say that the major emotional climaxes failed to register. The suppressed fire of this Hedda was beautifully attuned to the size and shape of the tiny theatre.

So what shall I say now? I have been confounded: Unity is still alive, more: it flourishes. Its plays are still the most intelligent and enterprising to be seen in Wellington; its standards of production and acting are markedly better than they were, and in detailed finish of presentation, *Hedda Gabler* and *The Time of Your Life* showed a professional skill. As I write, Jonson's *Volpone* is about to go into rehearsal; in November, Anouilh's charming *Thieves' Carnival* will be presented, and in the studio, the Robinson Jeffers translation of the *Medea*. Make no mistake, therefore: Unity Theatre, Wellington, is alive. The first thirteen years of dramatic activity are the worst, they say: well, Unity has weathered them. Now it can go on to the next suit.

# REVIEWS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF NEW ZEALAND VERSE. Selected by Robert Chapman and Jonathan Bennett. *Oxford.* 21s.

THERE IS always a dilemma lying in wait for those who edit anthologies and it may well prove to be a beast with more than two horns. The editor of a collection of the 'Best Poems' of a year or a decade or a language perhaps has the problem ready solved for him; but whoever embarks on a comprehensive survey of the verse of a century or a country is faced with the difficult decision whether to print only those poems which satisfy certain standards of poetic excellence or whether to include work of inferior quality because of its historic interest, its adumbration of themes which are felt to have significance in relation to the collection as a whole, or simply in order to provide a general picture as varied and as representative as possible.

Mr Chapman walks warily round this dilemma in his introduction to the Oxford *Anthology of New Zealand Verse*. His survey spans a hundred years of verse-making, yet of the poems he and Mr Bennett have chosen to print, five-sixths have been published within the last thirty years. From the earlier period only a handful of poems by 'the successful few' survive, and even so some lowering of standards in favour of poets writing before 1920 is admitted. It is evident enough that Mr Chapman, like other anthologists and critics before him, returned from an exploration of our first seventy years exhausted and dispirited. as if from a day's circular crawl through pig-fern. How gladly, one feels, he would have cut our losses and, like Mr Curnow, begun with the nineteen-twenties. The loss would not be great. An evening with Alexander and Currie should convince most readers that, museum-interest apart, there is little in the early period worth reprinting. Our early verse displays all the characteristic weaknesses of run-of-the-mill Victorian poetry. Rumination, breast-beating, gush and heartiness find expression in verse as well-intentioned and as thick as porridge. 'More New Zealand verse is rendered impossible by its hackneyed verbiage than from any other cause', the editors of *New Zealand Verse* wrote in 1906. And that, alas, is true of much that they themselves included. Indeed, so dense is the verbiage that one cannot, frequently, see anything of the view. The editors of the Oxford anthology have wisely passed over most of the early landscape poetry in favour of more straightforward lyric and ballad poems which, being less self-consciously 'poetic', still retain a certain vigour and freshness.

Mr Chapman's Introduction is oddly—and unexpectedly—orthodox. It is explanatory rather than critical, and in so far as it

is critical it reiterates familiar generalizations. The paucity of good verse in the earlier period is accounted for by the lack of a national literary tradition. 'We might expect that until a viable literary tradition was established, as it was more or less in the nineteen-thirties, much individual talent would run to waste in a search for direction and form.' This has been said so often that it is in danger of becoming a self-perpetuating platitude. It overlooks the simpler, more obvious explanation that little poetry of lasting value was written before 1920 because there were few poets sufficiently gifted to write it. There does not seem to be much documentary justification for the somewhat sentimental notion that our early history is strewn with mute inglorious Swinburnes.

If the theory of 'individual talent running to waste for lack of direction and form' is admitted at all, it should surely be examined in the wider context of the general decline of the Romantic-Victorian tradition. Such an examination might suggest that the situation of the New Zealand poet was not, after all, a special case. Mr Chapman observes that 'the decade from 1914 to 1924 was more bare of creative verse than any since the eighteen-seventies and 'eighties', and the same observation could be made of English—and American—verse between 1904 and 1914. Writing of the literary situation in America between the beginning of the century and 1914, T. S. Eliot has said: 'Undergraduates at Harvard in my time read the English poets of the 'nineties who were dead: that was as near as we could get to any living tradition. Certainly I cannot remember any English poet then alive who contributed to my own education . . . I do not think it too sweeping to say, that there was no poet, in either country, who could have been of use to a beginner in 1908 . . . The question was still, where do we go from Swinburne? And the answer appeared to be, nowhere.'

That situation was radically altered by the work of Eliot himself, Pound and Yeats, and by the belated publication of Hopkins's poems. Mr Chapman mentions 'the impulse, set going by T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound some fifteen years before' as 'another factor which helped liberate, encourage and set the course' for New Zealand poets in the 1930's; but he adds that 'it would distort the relative importance of the elements which entered into the upsurge of that decade to notice only this last external factor.' Nevertheless, the publication, within a period of ten years, of Eliot's *Poems, 1909-1925*, Pound's *Selected Poems* and the early *Cantos*, the second edition of Hopkins's *Poems*, Yeats's *The Tower* and *The Winding Stair*, the slight but disproportionately influential *New Signatures*, together with the first collections of Auden, Day Lewis, MacNeice and Spender, probably contributed more to the development of New Zealand verse than most of our critics seem willing to admit. Not only did these English, Irish

and American poets effect a revolution in technique, bringing poetry once more into living touch with contemporary speech and contemporary sensibility and imposing on all who read their work intelligently stricter standards of poetic craftsmanship, but many of their poems suggested ways in which local and 'occasional' themes could be treated boldly, unselfconsciously and without the taint of provincialism. It would hardly be possible to over-emphasize the significance of Yeats's later poetry in relation to much of the best work written in this country in the last twenty-five years.

To stress this close—and continuing—relationship between New Zealand poetry and English poetry in general is not to minimize the achievement of our poets; it is rather to suggest the inadmissability of special pleading in any consideration of our literary history. Did the fact that the New Zealand writers of the nineteenth century lived 'half a world away from London' really have any significant bearing on the quality of the verse they wrote? Would they have written better poetry had they lived close to the throbbing heart of things? It is to be doubted if they would have written as well—or written at all, many of them—since such virtues as this early poetry possesses seem to derive from the stimulation of unfamiliar scenes and experiences denied their stay-at-home cousins. And it is really nonsense for Mr Chapman to speak, as he does, of 'the first articulate generation of poets, the men of the 'thirties'. The poetry of Pember Reeves is sufficient to refute this statement. It is the fully articulate utterance of a man gifted with considerable power of poetic expression using the techniques of his period with skill and discrimination. He is the best of our early poets, and for him remoteness and strangeness seem to have been an inspiration rather than a handicap.

A good anthology is something more than a sum of its parts, more than a representative selection, more, even, than a collection of the best poems available within the limits set by the editor or his publishers. A good anthology can be critical as well as expository; the critical judgement that has gone into the selection of the poems can impose a unity and order on the material, however diverse, which illuminates the work of individual writers while at the same time displaying more clearly the characteristic qualities of the collection as a whole. Michael Roberts's *Faber Book of Modern Verse* was an anthology of this nature; so, too, was Allen Curnow's *Book of New Zealand Verse*; and it is difficult to suggest any other reason for the superiority of these volumes over similar collections than the special qualifications of the editor himself—a greater command of all the relevant material, a keener perception as to where the emphasis should fall, a more sensitive discrimination among individual poems.

The chief weakness of the new Oxford anthology is that it is

not, in this sense, critical. While it contains much of the best poetry that has been written in this country and represents, reasonably well, the achievement of our best poets, it does not, as Mr Curnow's collection did, set that poetry in a fresh and commanding perspective. Perhaps that is something that can be done only once in a generation; nevertheless, the earlier *Book of New Zealand Verse* gives a more impressive and more coherent account of our poetry, and a comparison of the two collections, where comparison is possible, makes evident the thoroughness and judgement with which Mr Curnow surveyed his field. Of necessity Mr Chapman and Mr Bennett print many poems which appeared in Mr Curnow's collection; where they depart from his choice the omission or substitution is almost always a matter for regret.

This lack of steady critical judgement is apparent in a number of ways. There seems little justification for the inclusion of four and a half pages of muddled pseudo-poetry by Hubert Church ('There was a music throbbed athwart the street / Few chimes agone . . . ') and the total exclusion of Arnold Wall. Nor is it easy to see why, in a collection so representative, the work of Alan Mulgan has been ignored. And there is surely some want of critical balance in a collection which includes nine poems by Louis Johnson and only six by Ursula Bethell. Indeed the treatment of Ursula Bethell demonstrates a characteristic failure to strike to the heart of a writer's work, and select those poems which best represent the unique quality of his vision. Like R. A. K. Mason, Ursula Bethell is a poet whose work as a whole is the expression of a fully developed personality with a coherent philosophy of life. The six poems printed here do not adequately display that strikingly individual response to experience which raises even her less successful poems above the level of conventional verse writing.

James K. Baxter is represented by twenty-one poems; more space is devoted to his work than to that of any other poet. Yet the selection is not altogether satisfactory; it displays the range of Mr Baxter's technique without sufficiently emphasizing the power and originality of his best work. Indeed, a desire to illustrate the variety of each poet's work, and the variety of recent New Zealand poetry in general, may account for the singularity of some of the choices. Alistair Campbell's 'O Catch Miss Daisy Pinks' is an amusing little fantasy, but to print it, and not to print that striking piece of imaginative writing, 'The Return', is a curious editorial aberration. In his introduction, Mr Chapman deplores 'the want of really large and highly developed poems', yet when the opportunity does occur to print something more than a selection of detached lyrics, he refuses to accept it. Of the eight short lyrics making up Alistair Campbell's fine 'Elegy', only two are printed, and since no indication is given that they form part of a sequence, the concluding lines of 'Now Sleeps the Gorge'

must baffle anyone unfamiliar with the poem in its proper context.

But it is always possible to quarrel with the selection of poems drawn from so wide a field. Perhaps no anthology is ever wholly satisfactory to anyone except the editor himself; and even he may feel impelled to exclude poems he would like to print in the interest of a more varied or more representative selection. If there are, as has been suggested, some puzzling omissions, and if the achievement of our best poets is less clearly demonstrated here than in the earlier *Book of New Zealand Verse*, the collection remains a valuable one. There are few poems in the later part of the book which fall below a general level of excellence, and the editors' obvious sympathy with the most recent generation of writers has secured a generous representation of their work. The appearance of this handsome volume bearing the Oxford imprint is striking proof of the development which has taken place since Alexander and Currie wrote, fifty years ago: 'The invitation to a volume of minor poetry, all written by dwellers in a little island country that has only not been forgotten by the world because it has never come much into the world's mind, is a task that would demand delicate walking.'

*Lawrence Baigent*

THE SULLEN BELL. Dan Davin. *Michael Joseph.* 15s.

THE THEME of Dan Davin's new book is implied in the title—(No longer mourn for me when I am dead / Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell . . . .). The characters have survived the war but are haunted by memories of the dead, so that the theme becomes the familiar one of 'business as usual'—the need to shut the door on the haunted room.

The characters are all New Zealanders who by devious routes have come to London soon after the end of the war and now constitute an unplanned colony of expatriates. Chief among them are Hugh Egan and Sally McGovern, and it is through them that the theme is mainly worked out though all the characters have lost friends in the war, and all are uncertainly feeling their way into the peace. But it is a wife that Hugh has lost and Sally has lost her only real love, Bill, whose memory is intended to lie upon the book like the shadow of what might have been, the wasted promise and the opportunities that had come to nothing. These people, then, move in and out of each other's lives in a fashion desultory enough to suggest the lack of fixed directions. By the end of the book, however, a sense of conclusion is arrived at; the villain has been slain; Dave, the tall tough Kiwi unwilling or unable to put off battledress, has had the fight he has long been spoiling for; the

communist barrister and his wife, the renegade Catholic, have been reconciled; most other issues are settled, and above all Hugh and Sally have become engaged (to put it outmodishly). They have buried their dead.

Nothing about the handling of this theme will be unexpected by those acquainted with Mr Davin's other novels. The plotting is rather more workmanlike than before, economical without seeming too contrived. The pattern achieved has allowed him to introduce all the material he had available: a point to be taken up later. The narrative technique, like everything else about the book, is wholly up to date. The author here has however adopted the stance of total awareness, so that the novel fails to have the integration which might have resulted from limiting his vision to, say, that of Hugh. Hugh's case is after all central, or meant to be, and Mr Davin has done little more to explore or expose it than he has done for all the others. One is left to guess Hugh's superior thematic role from his having been endowed with so many attributes of the author.

Hugh Egan comes of Irish stock settled in Invercargill, has made a hard way in the world and won himself an education which ends in New Zealand with his gaining much distinction at Otago University. From there he has gone to Oxford in 1935, carrying with him an overlay of Marxism on his Irish heredity. When the war comes Hugh joins up with the New Zealand forces, rises from junior to senior rank (being senior anyhow in years to most of his comrades), has a distinguished war career and sees much of the fighting in the Mediterranean theatres. Now that the war is over he has resumed his university connections, is back in England and is compiling an official history of the campaign in Crete.

Why, one is compelled to wonder, has Mr Davin done all this? Does he regard this as the only recipe for a New Zealand hero? Or is it that he is incapable of devising any other? The latter, more charitable, conclusion is supported on every side by other features in the novel. What is the need for these intricate, elaborately noted, wholly bewildering shuttlings of the characters back and forth between the hemispheres? It is as though Mr Davin had worked from the files of the New Zealand Shipping Company, in order to get his report accurate. One grows weary of the legerdemain by which the author documents the paving stones without letting on he is doing so. The root of all this lies partly in the historian's anxiety to have the facts; partly in the expatriate's compulsion to assert at the one time his utter Kiwi-ness and his utter familiarity with the English scene. The mere trippers from down-under are heavily patronized more than once; the streets, the newspapers, are named (a different set on Sunday, of course); authenticity lies upon the book with a weight like Lofty Blomfield's (the imagery is forever as antipodean as bottles of plonk and Bluff oysters). Hugh warns Dave as they arrive from South-

ampton not to start in drinking there and then, 'or this station'll be too well-named'. The reader has to supply the clue to this quip, and the author-hero is thus relieved at one stroke of saying too much or too little. Actuality has become factuality.

At one point in the book there occurs this exchange:

'And isn't history art?'

'An inferior form of fiction.'

Much as one admires the talents and the energy of Mr Davin one is obliged to acknowledge that he writes an inferior form of fiction.

Whenever Mr Davin's characters generalize or philosophize the results are grotesquely immature. Bill, 'the real giant of our days', wouldn't go to a dance because 'he couldn't stand imitations'! What mental age does that sentiment give him?

The stream of consciousness by which the characters in turn reveal their past is here an orderly stream indeed, turning the mill-wheels of information with scarcely a drop wasted. The psychology might sometimes have been drawn from a handbook. Yet here, as in everything else, the author might justly retort, like Eliza Doolittle, 'I bet I got it right'.

What Mr Davin has indeed got right, again and again, is a sharp perception of the *relevant* details, the objects which symbolize the human situation he is dealing with. The Kiwi lingo is always faithful and often unforced. But best of all, there are many scenes, almost short story sequences, where Mr Davin seems suddenly to feel at last along the minds and motives of his characters and produce a record of the moment, touching, rueful or amused, of considerable delicacy.

One wishes he would commit himself more (the communist issue for example) and commit more of himself: it is not the facts one wants so much as the author's synthesis of them: not merely the management of literary techniques but the calling upon imaginative and emotional resources, some expense of spirit, the art, in short, which is a superior form of fiction.

*R. A. Copland*

THE PURITAN AND THE WAIF. A symposium of critical essays on the work of Frank Sargeson. Edited by Helen Shaw. *H. L. Hofmann, 75 Bell Road, Remuera, Auckland.* (Fifty copies: December 1954.)

THIS symposium in cyclostyled form starts out under heavy disadvantages. The most obvious of these is that it is premature: *I, For One* . . . . necessitates a complete reassessment, and *The Puritan and the Waif*, written before its appearance was obstinately published after it.

Then again the editor has not succeeded in defining the scope of each writer's scrutiny clearly enough, and there is some tedious

repetition. The title is a poor one; at least the word 'waif', a wan literary symbol, is better suited to the Christmas annual of *The Tatler and Sketch* than to the earthy idiom of Sargeson. He may be a stray, but a waif—I ask you?

With courage, if not discretion, the editor quotes one or two remarks from publishers who rejected this book and mutters darkly 'The correspondence and negotiations regarding the publication of these manuscripts would make a revealing chapter in a History of Book Publication in New Zealand'. However, frustrated in their just claims, the eight writers—deserted by another who withdrew his contribution—throw themselves upon their country, that is you and me, to judge their judgments, banged out now untidily on a polyglot typewriter in a mood of fervour and indignation.

All this is a little hard on Frank Sargeson, whom these men and women designed to honour by their homage and their understanding. Of the latter quality H. Winston Rhodes provides most in his essay 'The Moral Climate of Sargeson's Stories', already published in *Landfall*. Here is the best statement of Sargeson's rejection of 'the smug conventionalities of the garden suburb', his self-identification with 'the misfits, the dispirited and the lonely'. He is right to say that Sargeson's work calls for 'criticism which cannot be confined to aesthetics'.

D'Arcy Cresswell begins with a characteristic flourish, sideswiping at 'the bakers and bankers, the jerry builders, the advertising experts, and the Professors of English Literature' who, like the earwig, figure in his mind as the worst imported pests. He compares *Conversation with my Uncle* with the first wasp finding its way into the country he has himself abandoned, and sustains this metaphor for pages, not realizing—and the editor never felt it worth telling him—that the wasps have, in fact, arrived and trouble us with their physical presence. He evidently prefers the short stories to the later novels and remarks, with odd prescience, of *I Saw in my Dream*, 'More must come out of this hesitation and shyness before the novel we all hope for appears', and points out that Sargeson's work is by no means finished. Mr Cresswell ends an essay, which began with himself as a boy nuzzling the good New Zealand grass as yet uninfested with earwigs, by refocusing on the same engrossing target: 'Such premature drumhead pronouncements have been made in New Zealand upon my own aims and work and, although I ignore them, I don't like them.'

There is a good deal of freshness and insight in James K. Baxter's study. He remarks on the two levels in much of Sargeson's work—the social level which has endeared him to leftish reformers and the second level, 'what I call for want of a better word existential'. While I do not think the word 'existential' accurate or well-chosen in this context, Mr Baxter's point is important. Sargeson, as Mr Baxter remarks, is at times a deliberate propagandist or moralist,

but he is also an artist, and the artist's search for a spiritual truth beneath the forms of things gives his work a quality greater than the shallower part of his intentions.

Walter Allen in 'A Note from England' finds Sargeson the first New Zealand *national* writer (rather than Katherine Mansfield). Of *I Saw in my Dream* he writes 'Technically, Sargeson's short stories are perfect. Technically, his novel seems to me naive to the point of ineptitude.' He emphasizes that Sargeson has had to make his own tradition—involving both a heavy creative task and a painful and unacknowledged process of unlearning—and in this has brilliantly succeeded.

In a long study of the narrative technique of Sargeson, Dan Davin also alludes to the change of tone and intention ushered in by *I Saw in my Dream*, the first writing, as he points out, in which Sargeson abandons the first person narrator.

Other essays are contributed by E. P. Dawson ('I Believe'), Erik Schwimmer ('A Picaresque View of Life') and Helen Shaw ('Sargeson and Mansfield in Contrast') who is also the editor and presiding genius.

You will have realized already that this book has not taken me by storm. Its chief merit, for me, is to send me back again to the short stories and to *That Summer*. Much of it is good, and very little entirely silly. At the same time it seems to me to be a missed opportunity. Some of the writers seem to be concerned as much to find a place on a bandwaggon (and pay their fares by a suitable genuflexion on alighting) as to take a new long look at the work of Sargeson. But when they fail, they are laboured rather than glib. Their sincerity and affection for Sargeson's work are not in question, and if they have not always succeeded in sharing their enthusiasm, nothing they have written should discourage the curiosity of a reader—if such a person exists in this country—who has no acquaintance with Frank Sargeson's work. My misgiving is rather that they have done too much not quite well enough: a solo—for instance, a longer study by Winston Rhodes—would have been more appropriate (at this juncture in Sargeson's career) than this assorted chorus of greeting, which tends to promote the idea—obviously involuntarily—that it is time we embalmed Sargeson and laid him in his monument against the great awakening.

*David Hall*

A VOICE ON THE WIND. THE STORY OF JESSIE MACKAY. Nellie F. H. Macleod. *A. H. & A. W. Reed.* 12s. 6d.

HERE, in one hundred and fourteen pages, are the external facts of Jessie Mackay's life. They are presented with neither more nor less understanding than one would look for from a close friend of

the family. Occasionally this vantage point is used to supply a homely detail, irradiated by that affection and respect which Miss Mackay so frequently inspired. 'I liked best to hear her own opinions, especially since, if I talked, she invariably fell asleep. I learned not to be embarrassed by this, and indeed never cease to be amused by this Mackay habit. No Mackay that I knew ever sought sleep, much less courted it. Sleep had to capture them unawares.'

But we are not really to be permitted to capture Jessie Mackay unawares. 'To the biographer hampered by the non-existence of any other records of her reactions to the political events of the eighties, the name poem ['The Sitter on the Rail'] is a document of value.' And a note below admits that 'No letters or diaries have been used for this biography'. One is left wondering whether absolutely no records remain from any period, or whether this is all part of the reticence which passes over what must have been major and formative decisions in Jessie Mackay's life with Victorian inadequacies about 'suitors of intellect, character and charm' and 'one who remained a life-long bachelor for her sake'. If the poet did indeed refuse to 'let my love prevail /Over a lofty cause'—in this case, nursing her mother until her death in 1898, and later caring for the younger sisters and brothers—then readers of her biography can expect enough information and consideration of the question to let them see Jessie Mackay as she was.

Not only are we left quite outside these decisions but it is also difficult to trace from this book exactly what happened over the whole crucial fourteen years between Jessie Mackay's graduation from Christchurch Training College and 1897 when her father lost all his property. We are told little more than that she was too ill after pneumonia to go on teaching, had suitors, visited Australia, looked after her mother, and published poems.

Thereafter Mrs Macleod is on, to her, firmer ground. For the Jessie Mackay she knew was the Jessie Mackay of the last thirty years, at first editor of the Ladies' Page of a weekly, then freelance journalist, and always the propagandist of causes. The poet is never quite lost behind the Turkish Atrocities, the Irish Question, Prohibition, Vegetarianism or Anti-Vivisection, but nearly so. Indeed the problem which really gets discussed in this book is not the merit of Jessie Mackay as a poet or what in her life influenced her poetic development but, rather, was Jessie Mackay a minor prophet, or a crank with courage and a flair for vigorous journalism.

It is not difficult to agree with Mrs Macleod that Jessie Mackay was a very fine woman and, the later causes notwithstanding, that she was often enough correct and was just that sort of humanitarian needed to offset the complacent hardheadedness of the New Zealand of Ward and Massey.

One says 'offset' advisedly, for change it she could not. To have tried to change it would have meant coming to terms with it and

understanding it. Sharply urging the higher way Jessie Mackay stayed in her pulpit and refused the twentieth century compromises of the party pledge and platform. Instead of analysing, she thought in absolutes; instead of specific methods, she offered personified abstractions. 'Woman, in her [Miss Mackay's] opinion, was the incurable individualist, the eternal revolutionary, and the mother's view nearest to God's view.'

And so to the relation of poet and poems. For the people who, Mrs Macleod insists, 'just would break in' on even the nature poetry, are personified qualities or absolutes, often protagonists of faith or self-sacrifice or a cause, and not people at all. The retelling in verse of myths and legends was not only something which might be expected from a devoted reader of Scott and from a child of nostalgic Highlanders, but a way of making usable stories out of impalpable abstractions. Sometimes, as in 'For Love of Appin', the feeling is so strong and honest that it comes through directly in its own right. Then it quite overcomes the fact that it is being given at two removes, and the result is a poem. Yet lightly anchored so far from the known and the real, Jessie Mackay's poems were forever being blown on to the rocks of sentimentality by the gusts of her emotion, or being driven among the shoals of vague whimsy.

Mrs Macleod is too involved in the same habits of thought to see the relation between them and Jessie Mackay's poetry. Instead the poet is viewed as she saw herself, as one who was impelled by 'Utopian impatience' to be 'a doer' rather than 'a dreamer'. 'The Burial of Sir John McKenzie', however, offers proof that Jessie Mackay's poetry and her social conscience could unite on an immediate theme with an immediate impact on the reader. In 1907 she praised W. P. Reeves for his use of the exciting theme of New Zealanders building a new society, but turned her own face away 'to dimsy lights far spent'.

The explanation can be approached only by reversing Mrs Macleod's principal critical judgement that Jessie Mackay had an 'almost complete imperviousness to nineteenth and early twentieth century influences'. The poet who noted 'a Tennysonian glamour deepens as we near the soft green sea-fields that Tennyson walked' was not impervious to her reading, nor was the versifier of 'The Wraith of Egfrith Ranaldson' or 'The Noosing of the Sun-God' unaware of Longfellow. Moreover, a writer who could render down that superb ballad 'the Twa Sisters' into 'The Miracle of Binnorie' must have had other values besides an 'early and abiding love for song'.

The truth is that Jessie Mackay was as much influenced by the state of contemporary poetry as it was understood in New Zealand and Australia as David McKee Wright, that exponent of the colonials-cum-Kipling school. It is remarkable that, despite mentioning her contributions to *The Bulletin*, her visit to Australia in 1890, the literary friendship with Mary Gilmore, her publication of a col-

lection in Melbourne, and her thanks to the influential A. G. Stephens of the *Bookfellow*, Mrs Macleod does not follow these route marks and arrive at the importance of her Australian colleagues' writing in confirming Jessie Mackay in her view of the function of poetry.

Nearly sixty years ago O. T. J. Alpers, in intending to praise the contributions of Jessie Mackay to his *Jubilee Book of Canterbury Rhymes*, defined the contradictions for us. 'The ballad swing of Miss Jessie Mackay's "Passing of Macphail", or the musical cadences of her "Spring Fires" rank her as a most melodious singer. Even among our youngest poets we find felicitous diction and musical rhythm; and the facile use of some of the most difficult metres in which the "pretty school" delights.' The facile, the felicitous, and the pretty turned Jessie Mackay away from what she could feel and know and touch. They substituted 'the seer' for the observer. Her remarkable powers of description, her sensitivity to the flow of a line, her pleasure in the exact word—witness the first and third stanzas of 'Spring Fires'—were wasted by going 'areiving . . . Through the world of air, /Raiding hills o' Faerie /For our wizard ware'. With such a view of what poetry was, it is no wonder that she steadily deserted poetry for the directness of prose and for the relative actuality of her causes.

Mrs Macleod has appended thirteen poems representative of Jessie Mackay's more successful work. Like the memoir as a whole, these poems will remind New Zealanders of a fine woman and a considerable talent moulded by living always, through choice and circumstance among 'the lone gray company before the pioneers'.

*Robert Chapman*

THE WANDERING ISLANDS. A. D. Hope. *Sydney: Edwards and Shaw.* 15s.

IF THE dust-jacket classification of A. D. Hope as 'wit and satirist' savours of Romantic prejudice and suggests some lesser breed of poet it needs qualification. This is not to deny that many of his poems depend on 'wit', or that some are satirical. But Mr Hope's range is not limited to this kind of writing.

Yet his satirical poems do make the most immediate impact. I think my first reaction to *The Wandering Islands* was to overrate Mr Hope as a poet, or at least to admire him for the wrong reasons. For one thing, he seemed to have so many timely things to say about generally-accepted social conventions. But appreciation on these grounds is not the kind that lasts. A poet's quality must rest on something more solid than a facility for acute social criticism.

A distinction needs to be made, then, between the first two sections of this book, and the third section—*Heldensagen*. It is only

in this latter section that the 'wit and satirist' classification applies absolutely. Here Mr Hope is at his 'funniest', producing a rather grotesque laughter by the intellectual (and skilful) process of making social institutions look like something other than themselves—

> Grease to the elbows Mum and Dad enthuse,
> Pocket their spanners and survey the bride;
> Murmur: 'A sweet job! All she needs is juice!
> Built for a lifetime—sleek as a fish—Inside
>
> He will find every comfort: the full set
> Of gadgets; knobs that answer to the touch
> For light or music; a place for his cigarette;
> Room for his knees; a honey of a clutch.'

Another example is the analogy of churchgoers to cats rubbing luxuriously at the shins of a domestic god. This is Mr Hope's only kind of humour: not the lyric poet's sophisticated 'alliance of levity with seriousness by which seriousness is intensified', but the satirist's surgical knife (sometimes wielded like a blunt instrument). For what they are, many of the poems in this section are admirable. They achieve what they set out to do. But however pleasing to sensibilities at war with a social environment in which middle-class smugness and proletarian good-jokerhood rule, they depend nevertheless on the kind of partisan simplification that has nothing to do with the deeper perceptions of the lyric poet. *Heldensagen* shows Mr Hope to be a biting social critic. His stature as a *poet* must be judged on the two other sections.

These sections may only show the other side of the penny. Mr Hope's satire proceeds from a genuine disgust, and when he ceases to attack an external apparent 'cause' of this emotion, the emotion remains but the 'wit and satirist' description ceases to apply. The technique is now one of looking inwards, of analysing the self rather than lobbing bombs into passing cars.

For Mr Hope, in the writing of poetry a spade is a spade. This doesn't mean that his poetry is one-dimensional, but that the 'doubleness' of his vision is conceptual rather than verbal: the poem is complete when the single conceit on which it builds has been fully developed. A section, for example, from 'The Muse'—

> She is Penelope. Nightlong at the loom
> She must unravel the promise in her heart,
> Subdue the monthly protest of the womb;
> And still she knows, for all her art,
> While its one poor design grows out of date,
> The gods, who have all time, too late relent
> And when her triumph comes, it comes too late.

This is fairly typical of Mr Hope's calmer style—a style that would

satisfy Donald Davie (spokesman for the new group of poets in England at the moment) with his demand for simple syntax and 'chaste' diction. And like the poets of this group, Mr Hope's most noticeable stylistic fault is rhythmical obviousness.

A less immediately perceived fault is his lack of concreteness. One wonders often whether the immensity of Mr Hope's horror can, in its extreme moments, be anything more than psychological aberration. And this being the case, his occasional difficulty in giving it tangible expression is understandable. Some of his poems emerge as a curious mixture of erotic symbols, primitive fantasy, and jungle metaphors, the total effect of which is confusing because it lacks concrete setting.

In poets like Herrick, Yeats, Thomas—poets who experience life vitally and give out a sense of vigour—there is often an acute awareness of death. In Mr Hope these qualities are in reverse. If we can take the autobiographical poem 'Ascent into Hell' as meaning what it says, life for him is an agonizing business. Hence perhaps his attitude to birth and the processes leading towards birth (revealed, for example, in the poem dealing with the conception and birth of Cain, which builds in tension towards its final terrible line—

And the first murderer lay upon the earth).

He is aware, not of the glorious attractiveness of the sexual process, but of its horrible attractiveness. To adapt some of Eliot's terms, he has the vision of the horror, but not of the glory; he has walked often in hell, but never been rapt to heaven.

He is capable occasionally of strains of elegy and of praise. But his praise is for Yeats, Blake, Swift—men whose energy he lacks. And his elegiac note proves to be the enervation that follows hopeless protest, rather than true elegy which affirms life by regretting that it passes.

It is perhaps because of this—because where he is most serious he seems to negate life instead of affirming it—that his feeling for 'the right words in the right order' is not enough to give his poetry a satisfying force. Facing outward there is destructive energy; facing in there is only horror and hence negation. This is not to deny him a peculiar appeal, which proceeds perhaps from honesty and a firm intellectual grasp: I enjoy much of his poetry, but find myself rejecting it.

Mr Hope lays a large amount of the blame for his misery on Eve and her descendants. His brave little Everyman, Henry Clay, is accidentally squashed to death by a 'girl of uncommon size' who has taken him to her bed; he is used thereafter as a bedside mat. In 'The Explorers' we are given a look into the primitive jungle world of women in which

Stanley would have turned back; Livingstone never had such courage,

and in which the aim of all is to have

> the little brick cottage, the ration of lawn in front
> and a kiss at the gate and a pair of trousers walking daily to the office.

There is nothing here of man against an Australian background. Mr Hope's attitude to himself as poet is best revealed in the fine poem 'Observation Car'. It hardly needs saying that he avoids the Jindyworobak sprawl, the Southerly crawl, and the old time Bulletin bump. To avoid these faults he has denied himself the interest shared by most Australian poets in landscape. Yet one cannot help feeling that an eye focussed more frequently on solid familiar objects might have done good service to the poetry. Mr Hope does, however, belong with the most adult of Australian poets, and seems to be getting the attention he deserves. His book has been handsomely printed, and is about to go into a second edition.

*C. K. Stead*

THE TWO FIRES. Judith Wright. *Angus and Robertson.* 15s.

ORPHEUS AND OTHER POEMS. Harold Stewart. *Angus and Robertson.* 15s.

IT IS a pity that the quality of the verse in these two books in no way matches the excellence of the printing. Both books are disappointing and confirm my impression that Australian poets—speaking generally—allow too much uneven and indifferent work to appear in print. It seems to me that Australia is badly in need of a few good critics. Good criticism might, for example, have pointed up the weaknesses in Miss Wright's work—diffuseness, imprecision, vagueness—and helped her to make a more intelligent use of her gifts. For she is undoubtedly a gifted writer; everywhere in her work is evidence of an active, though largely disorganized imagination. Good criticism might also have helped Mr Stewart by discouraging him from printing *Orpheus and Other Poems*, which seems to me a grey dead book.

Miss Wright, unlike the self-assured Mr Stewart, is uneasily aware of her failings, but does no more than record them in lines reminiscent of T. S. Eliot:

> Yet I go on from day to day, betraying
> the core of light, the depth of darkness—
> my speech inexact, the note not right,
> never quite sure what I am saying—('For Precision').

*The Two Fires* is Miss Wright's fourth book, but it shows no real advance on her earlier books. She is still too easily satisfied, and is still reluctant to persist with a poem when it becomes complex or

obstinate, with the result that the present collection contains many poems which tamely peter out or are hopelessly unresolved. This partly explains the failure—and obscurity—of her more ambitious efforts like 'The Two Fires', 'Two Generations', 'To a Child Outside Time', 'The Harp and the King'—poems on contemporary themes of universal significance in which Miss Wright sounds a deeper, more despairing note than in any of her earlier volumes.

In her role as a prophetess Miss Wright has acquired something of the hectic vision of a modern Cassandra, but all too often her warnings on the horror that underlies the present age fall on the reader's mind like ink on blotting-paper, leaving no more than a blurred impression. Occasionally, when she frees herself from the mesh of rhetoric, she writes with a compelling urgency and directness:

> My father rock, do you forget the kingdom of the fire?
> The aeons grind you into bread—
> into the soil that feeds the living and transforms the dead;
> and have we eaten in the heart of the yellow wheat
> the sullen unforgetting seed of fire?
>
> And now, set free by the climate of man's hate,
> that seed sets time ablaze. ('The Two Fires')

This is striking verse, but it is not in any sense original. The imagery and rhythms mostly derive from Edith Sitwell, a poet whose influence on contemporary verse—especially on the work of women poets with public consciences—has rarely been salutary.

Miss Wright is not 'one of the finest of contemporary poets', as the blurb has it—her energy is too fitful and her intellect too limited—but she is a true poet who has yet to recognize the nature of her talent. When she does, it is possible she will be less tempted to squander it on large florid statements, 'never quite sure of what she is saying', but will write directly and simply, 'her speech exact, the note right', on themes closer to the hearth.

> Silence is the rock where I shall stand.
> Oh, when I strike it with my hand
> may the artesian waters spring
> from that dark source I long to find. ('Silence')

Mr Stewart is much inferior to Miss Wright in the quality of his talent. He seems to me a bookish poet, deriving his ideas and imagery from his reading, but without the power to translate them into poetry. Not surprisingly his work is dead, and only occasionally twitches in imitation of life.

The *pièce de résistance* of *Orpheus and Other Poems*, Mr Stewart's second book, is the Orpheus cycle, pretentiously described in the blurb as a 'statement of the progress and regress of a poet's soul'. It is monumentally dull. The versification throughout its

twenty-seven parts, though correct in a superficial sense, is mechanical and wholly lacking in tension; while the inhabitants of the underworld are so lifelessly evoked they might have come directly from a classical dictionary.

When Mr Stewart attempts to renovate the Orphean myth in terms of Freudian or Jungian symbolism this sort of nonsense results:

> Orpheus, longing for the womb,
> Regresses to prenatal gloom;
> And dares, with unabandoned hope,
> Enter the mountainside, and grope
> Down the maternal cavern's slope.
>
> ('The Crossing of the Styx')

And this:

> She lay, half-woman and half-fish:
> Submarine symbol of the wish.
>
> ('Orpheus and the Sirens')

The remaining two sections of Mr Stewart's book are no better or worse than the Orpheus cycle. 'The Myths' are dry and academic exercises which never succeed in becoming air-borne. Here, as in the final section of his book, Mr Stewart arranges his material into orderly patterns, but fails to invest it with poetic meaning.

*Alistair Campbell*

THE LEGEND OF THE NINETIES. Vance Palmer. *Melbourne University Press.* 25s.

THE 'legend' here examined is that the nineties in Australia were a period 'of intense artistic and political activity, in which the genius of this young country had a brief and brilliant first flowering', but a Golden Age that passed as quickly as it had come, leaving the nostalgia of 'a lost tradition'. In deciding whether the nineties have been made too much of, Mr Palmer seeks to sort out the primary formative influences that shaped the pattern of Australian culture from the early settler days, through Eureka, the heyday of the small selector and the bushranging phase, and on to the nineties. So far as I know no one else has thus attempted to sketch the distinctive features of Australian literature viewed as an expression of the sociological and political conditions of the colonial period (the economic and political aspects, primarily, have been worked over with learning and critical acumen by Mr Brian Fitzpatrick, among others. Moreover, some fresh and highly relevant literary material has become available since Mr Palmer's book was published, in particular, Hugh Anderson's *Colonial Ballads* (1955) and *Australian Bush Ballads* (1955) by Douglas Stewart and Nancy Keesing).

Some of the most sensitive writing in the book is in the pages where Mr Palmer seeks to define the character of 'a national type' of Australian and to show later on how the literature of the nineties is largely moulded as to its values by the democratic and equalitarian outlook of such a 'type'. The concept of 'mateship', given dramatic expression in the diggers' oath at Eureka, is familiar enough and finds a contemporary interpretation in much of present-day Australian writing. Vance Palmer reminds us that the democratic spirit in the literature of the nineties was primarily a creation of the bush, born of the common bond between shearer, timber-worker, boundary-rider and rouseabout, and contrasted sharply with the implied decadence and easy privileged life of the townsman, capitalist or otherwise (the image of 'the Urban Fat' and Furphy's fixing of boundaries for the sheep and the goats in his phrase 'the spurious and blue-moulded civilization of the littoral'). Springing from the way of life of the Australian rural worker, a 'special type' of Australian—the Joe Wilsons, the Clancys, and the Tom Collinses—was established by the writers of the nineties and regarded by them as 'the literary norm'. Thus, whatever its 'absolute value', their work came to have a special quality which 'might be called . . . democratic' (treating quite naturally the swagman as the equal in human terms of the squatter). And Mr Palmer rejects any idea of a 'lost tradition', insisting that this democratic quality is 'strongly marked in the Australian novel and short story of today'.

Few, if any, are better qualified than Vance Palmer to spell out such generalizations. Perhaps it is a theme for a separate study, but one would wish to have had some indications of the manner in which this democratic tradition of the nineties has left a permanent impress on the later literature, particularly in the light of the rapid post-1900 industrialization of Australia and the necessary decline of the 'national mystique' of the bush. Having an eye to the social nonconformity of much of recent Australian writing, one may also ask whether, perhaps amidst the reflective urbanities of his presentation, Mr Palmer has not a little underplayed that element of hard-hitting protest, of contempt for authority (easily identified with tyranny), and militant urging to right social wrongs which is so ingrained in the temper of the period from Eureka to the nineties (the tone of the bushranger ballads, the social challenge of some of Lawson's verse, the protesting radicalism of the social poems of Victor Daley, Furnley Maurice and others, and, implicitly, if toned down in its disarmingly good-natured mode of expression, in the conscious socialist proselytizing of Furphy).

Mr Palmer's approach to his theme is the more valuable in that he is able to view it from the wider horizons of contemporary English and European social and cultural trends. His manner is discursive and impressionistic, delighting in marginalia and colourful instances flowing from a richly-stored mind in love with its theme.

One may miss a strictly sustained elaboration of argument: especially in the closing chapters there is a lack of co-ordination of the sociological and literary phases of development. And since the story stops at the turn of the century, the early-promised inquiry as to 'how far it [the legend] had a lasting effect' goes unanswered, except for brief comments on the immediate post-Federation years.

But if, in the end, we are not quite sure as to how far the legend has to be modified, we are a great deal better informed about its birth and its primary constituents. And we have been enriched on the way by many wisely-balanced and suggestive comments and evaluations, particularly those concerning Paterson, Lawson and Furphy, the *Bulletin* editors, and William Lane. For these things alone, apart from the stimulus of seeing new ground broken by the tackling of the theme itself, any student of Australian literature would be grateful.

*Ian Milner*

# CORRESPONDENCE

To The Editor

Sir: May I take up certain points made by Miss Joan Stevens in her letter about the teaching of English in New Zealand, printed in the last number of *Landfall*.

First, I do not find in your original comments on this subject any indication that you believe the deterioration of the standards of English teaching to be very new. Nor did you write in unsophisticated admiration of Good Old Days existing as recently as the 1930s. Rather, you spoke of a very slow deterioration, surely to be connected with the spread of secondary education in this country. I am strongly in favour of education being spread as widely as possible, but I can see only disaster ahead of a country which teaches both mediocre and able children by the same methods, and with the same aims. This is what seems to me to be happening in New Zealand at present. It did not happen to anything like the same extent in the past.

Second, Miss Stevens insists that the value of the study of formal English is still a matter of dispute. Many may indeed, for all I know, dispute it. As a teacher of twelve years' experience, I do not. To take one point alone, one immense obstacle facing the teacher who tries to help pupils to write better English is their inability to understand their mistakes. Laborious and often unsuccessful explanation is frequently needed to show what is wrong with a misrelated participle or an incongruous construction. I am sure Miss Stevens would agree that it is necessary to point out such

mistakes, and that the process is simplified if the pupil has some distant acquaintance with a participle. I am constantly baffled in my attempts to improve the way quite senior students write by the certainty that they will not understand corrections expressed briefly and accurately in grammatical terms. To those children at least who plan to continue their education after they leave school an adequate knowledge of grammar is essential. This in my experience they are not getting, and they are therefore hampered in their struggles to write better English.

Third, with regard to the too great use of text-books made up of extracts, there seem to be two points to consider. The first is the extent to which class work in English at Fifth (and Sixth) Form level is devoted to reading such books, rather than complete works. It would be hard to collect evidence on which to base a satisfactory answer to this question. Miss Stevens claims that limited use is being made of them, and has described the resources on which schools may now draw for extra reading matter. I know that this is the official attitude. Conversation with teachers, school pupils and students leaves me with a vivid impression that the books that are used and remembered are ones like *Realms of Gold*, and that the most familiar authors are people like Mamour, Moon and Gawthrop.

In connection with this question, I recently asked forty-five students selected at random from a first-year university class a number of questions, among them 'What works did you read *in entirety* in class during your Fifth and Sixth Form years?' I explained exactly what I meant by 'in entirety'. Only fifteen of them claimed to have read even one long poem (that is, a poem longer than *Lycidas*, or the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* or similar anthology pieces). Five of the fifteen however named no long poem other than *The Ancient Mariner* (which I certainly read at school in Form III). And another six gave ridiculous answers. That is, one claimed to have read in entirety and in class *Paradise Lost*; another *Paradise Lost* AND *Paradise Regained*; a third *Paradise Lost* and the *Canterbury Tales*; a fourth *In Memoriam* and the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*; a fifth 'most of Tennyson, Browning and the Romantics'; and a sixth ' some of the longer poems, e.g., *Angeline* and *Kublai Khan*' [sic]. All but one of these students had spent two years in Form VI.

Here we have a little evidence—I don't want to make too much of six blunderers—that reading books of extracts at school has left pupils with very strange ideas about great poems. It is true that they would not be likely to make such mistakes about novels or plays.

I suggest then that books of extracts *are* being used to excess in New Zealand schools, and that they are demonstrably doing harm, especially in connection with the teaching of poetry.

The other point connected with the use of such books, which

are admittedly a concession to our pupils' weakness, concerns the acceptance by Miss Stevens of 'a balanced diet of some extracts studied intensively, combined with some full reading, covering imaginative and technical matters within the child's grasp' as the ideal at which English teaching should aim. Such a statement begs the question at issue, the question of just what is within the child's grasp, and of how much he gains from reading works (like the plays of Shakespeare) which in some ways are quite beyond it. English teaching in New Zealand is infected by the acceptance of low standards and ideals. We consistently underestimate the maturity of our pupils. We expect children of fifteen to work and earn high wages in shops, offices, factories and farms, but the more intelligent contemporaries of these workers (that is, those who stay longer at school) we expect to need spoon-feeding. It is only necessary to compare them with English grammar-school children to see how much more they could attain. Granted that some of our Fifth and Sixth Form pupils really are immature, and will need nursing along, many others before that stage are greedy for real books, books that are often far beyond their full understanding (as are the plays of Shakespeare) but from which they gain enormously. Why do we teachers go on accepting and perpetuating the myth that New Zealand children are intellectually immature? Why do we acquiesce in the demand of parents that children should be 'kept young'? (I have been reproached by parents for introducing Fifth and Sixth Form girls to authors as various as Mary Webb and William Faulkner, and the cry is always the same—why obtrude the nasty side of life on their notice?)

I believe that many of our ablest children are being denied the full exercise of their powers by a theory and system of English teaching which is adapted to training the mediocre. It seems to me lamentable that such a system should be supported by the teachers themselves.

*Margaret Dalziel*

SIR: In his review of books by Messrs Palmer, Vickers and Morrison, Mr Duggan uses a standard which is highly debatable. This standard comes nearest to concise and actual statement in, 'Mr Palmer is concerned with literature, and with everything implicit in that; they [Messrs Vickers and Morrison] are concerned with society, and with literature as a social instrument.'

Mr Palmer, whom Mr Duggan sets up in the company under discussion as, 'the liberal representative of the standards, the values of art'; whom he sees, 'in the objective and formally disciplined role of artist'; makes no significant comment, even by implication, on his society, but he writes with a high degree of polished and detached technical competence. Mr Duggan wavers,

however, in his championship of pure art, with, 'But one cannot quite hold . . . to the firm and static notion of art', and he finds Mr Palmer's stories touching upon the mechanical facts of the human condition without illumination, and ranging over a variety of human situations without much depth of perception.

If this instance is any indication, pure art does not necessarily make any contribution to the sum total of significant human perception.

After holding up this empty example of the pure artist Mr Duggan proceeds to deny artistic status to Messrs Vickers and Morrison, in whose writing he finds 'the rather shrill yell of the literature of protest, the righteous fervour'. Is there here a note of irritation at having been unwillingly disturbed, and was there not a considerable amount of righteous fervour in the writing of John Bunyan?

Mr Vickers's *The Mirage* is a moving and powerful novel which can hardly fail to stimulate and provoke anyone at all concerned with people and problems outside himself, and yet one can almost hear Mr Duggan yawn as he catalogues, 'Racism, economic and moral oppression, miscegenation, violence—the tale is familiar enough'. Mr Duggan seems to prefer the reticences at any cost. Mr Duggan then says of *The Mirage*, 'It is not a novel because its direct aim is to prompt action, to promote reform by means of dramatic indictment'. If this implied definition of what a novel is not is accepted, then the status of a novel must be denied to *Germinal*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Quiet Flows the Don* and *Man's Estate*.

For Mr Duggan, the stories in *Black Cargo* are, 'mainly of the Australian waterfront, union solidarity, the workers' fight for their rights. As stories they display a considerable knowledge of these things, but don't manage to say much more.' Is Mr Duggan yawning again, or is he just not interested in enlarging his appreciation of the conflicting personal elements which play their various parts in waterfront politics, and which are presented by Mr Morrison with restrained implication, except in the title story, where explicit social comment rears its not necessarily ugly head? Mr Duggan complains about social comment as if it were some sort of artistic crime, and it seems as if he would deny the status of art to a story as outstanding as 'The Incense Burner' merely because of its implicit social comment.

If this review is truly representative of Mr Duggan's opinions, he would seem to be the advocate of an irresponsible and insignificant literature which feeds upon its own withered bowels.

*D. S. Walsh*

## NEW CONTRIBUTORS

*Fleur Adcock*. Born in Papakura 1934, lived in England 1939-47, and since then in Wellington. Took honours in Latin at Victoria College last year. Is married to the poet Alistair Campbell and has one son.

*Lawrence Constable* was on the staff of the N.Z.B.S. 1940-55, apart from war service with the R.N.Z.A.F. He broadcast numerous talks on travel, has written and produced features for both N.Z.B.S. and B.B.C., and visited and made a study of broadcasting services in Australia, Britain and Europe. Resigned as Senior Talks Officer to the N.Z.B.S. in 1955 and is now with the Transcription Service of the B.B.C. in London. Has contributed to the *N.Z. Listener* and *Weekly News*, and his book on the N.Z. scene, *Home Territory*, was published by the Pegasus Press in 1953.

*Charles Hilgendorf*. Born at Lincoln 1908; educated at Christ's College and Canterbury College; M.A. Farming in King Country 1934-7, since then in Ashburton County. Nuffield Travelling Scholarship in Farming 1950. Sometime Provincial President Federated Farmers, and on Dominion Council. Dominion Council Meat and Wool Section 1946 to date. Board of Governors, Lincoln College. J.P.

*Ian Milner*. Born 1911, educated at Waitaki and Canterbury College. N.Z. Rhodes Scholar 1934; at New College took firsts in Modern Greats and then in English. Returned to N.Z. and worked in the Education Department. Lecturer in Political Science, Melbourne University; during the war joined the Department of External Affairs at Canberra. Appointed to the U.N. Secretariat in New York after the war, served on U.N. missions in Palestine and Korea, and later resigned. Now lecturer in English language and literature in the Philological Faculty of Charles University, Prague. A contributor to *Meanjin* and other journals. With his wife, translated Jaroslav Pokorny's *Shakespeare in Czechoslovakia*.

*Evelyn Page*. Painter. Born 1899, trained at Canterbury School of Art 1915-22, and taught there 1930-6. In England 1936-8 and again in 1950. An original member of The Group in Christchurch; has held one-man shows in Christchurch (1936), Dunedin (1951), Wellington (1955), and exhibited with the Canterbury Art Society and the Academy in Wellington. Her work is represented in the Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, Auckland and Napier art galleries.

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

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*Spring Fires*. A Study in New Zealand Writing. Ormond Burton. Auckland: The Book Centre Ltd, 12 Queen's Arcade, C.1. 4s.

*The Voyage of the Hurunui*. D'Arcy Cresswell. The Caxton Press. 25s.

*New Zealand Now*. Oliver Duff. Second edition. Allen & Unwin and Paul's Book Arcade. 12s. 6d.

*I, For One . . . .* Frank Sargeson. The Caxton Press. 6s.

*J. C. Bradshaw*. A memoir. F. K. Tucker. Printed by The Caxton Press.

*The Seato Partnership*. (By courtesy of the Department of External Affairs, Wellington.)

*Laughter, not for a Cage*. Miles Franklin. Angus & Robertson. 25s.

*Three Men and Sydney*. Nancy Keesing. Angus & Robertson. 15s.

*The Sonnet in Australasia.* Louis Lavater. Revised and enlarged edition. Angus & Robertson. 25s.

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*Crime and Social Action.* George Godwin. Watts & Co. 18s.

*Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy.* Karl Marx. Edited by T. B. Bottomore and Maximilien Rubel. Watts & Co. 21s.

*Challenge to Heritage.* Ruth Anderson Oakley. London: The Saint Catherine Press Ltd, 29 Great Queen St, Kingsway, W.C. 6s.

*The Stone Elegies.* Seymour Gresser. Poetry Book Magazine. Vol. 7 No. 4. Summer 1955. International Literature and Art Co., 923-24 Fidelity Building, Baltimore 1, Maryland.

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# *Notes*

NEW ZEALAND life is richer in a number of ways than it was when the war ended in 1945. To record some of our new assets, there is, first of all, the National Orchestra, now ten years old, which was inconceivable in the thirties, and for which we should probably have had to wait many years yet if it had not been founded just when it was, under a government including a few men of unusually wide interests and sympathies. No country used to be counted civilized unless it possessed an orchestra and an opera; since we now possess one, and, in the New Zealand Opera Company, a nucleus of the other, we may claim to be fairly on the road to civilization. The existence of the Orchestra makes possible too a variety of chamber music, in combinations of members of the Orchestra with independent players, so that musical life, especially in Wellington, is surprisingly active, and is continually stimulated by the performances of players from Europe and America engaged by the Chamber Music Societies with the help of the N.Z.B.S.—this also a post-war development.

Then we have an established theatre company, the New Zealand Players, and—hardly less important—a form of repertory playing in small towns throughout the province in which one third of the population lives, under the Community Arts Service. One art gallery, Auckland's, being professionally run and holding frequent exhibitions of New Zealand and overseas work, has made the visual arts a living interest in the centre of our largest city. To provide for the future, a number of bursaries and scholarships ensure that every year a few gifted students of music, drama, painting, ballet, etc., are enabled to pursue their studies overseas; since a majority of them can be expected to return, the community is constantly renewing and enlarging its stock of skilled artists, to practise and to teach, with their fresh outlook, interests and ideas.

As for literature, the Literary Fund is doing useful work in aiding the publication of books, so that good writers can be fairly sure of getting their work published. This too is a great advance on earlier conditions. And now that the Fund has been granted a further £500 a year to provide an annual scholarship in letters, a first step has been taken to help writers in the most direct way possible, by offering them a period of security, or enabling them to travel.

Most of these changes in our cultural life were begun on the wave of energy and hope which followed the end of the war. If the hope, this time, was everywhere more subdued and possibly more realistic than that which followed the war of 1914-18, the revival of energy seems to have been turned, in New Zealand at least, to rather better use. It was used, partly, to lay foundations, to prepare for things and times to come. These new ventures are not only sources of activity, enjoyment and value, but in the nature of foundations. The work of *Landfall* too has been in part, as it must still be, to help lay foundations. It was launched on the same wave (which has not yet lost its momentum) into the uncertain future; with this number it completes its tenth year.

What other changes have come about during this period, what modification of the country's character and outlook, it is much harder to tell. When the children and grandchildren of the immigrants so cautiously—so timidly—introduced since the war (most of them from Britain and Holland) have grown up as New Zealanders, it may be possible to note changes that today we cannot feel coming. That is, provided we are granted a relatively quiet undisturbed course of development. But is it likely that we shall be? Must we not expect before long to be drawn much nearer to the centre of the world stage? The great powers of the age now taking shape, America and Russia, India and China, face each other not in Europe but in the Pacific. And close to us lies the last empty unexploited continent on earth, Antarctica, into which the older powers are about to feel their way. New Zealand is ceasing to be a remote rustic Eden without history and may soon find itself posted at one of the world's noisy crossroads. It might then easily become merely an island stepping-stone, unknown to the world at large except through the names of its international airports, and perhaps of rubber-stamp political leaders. But it might be made what potentially it is already, a country that shows in all its dealings a sturdy salty individuality, with a conscience of its own and a reasoned humane outlook strong enough to win the world's respect. Small countries like ours—the comment will bear repeating —can create for themselves an international role far more significant than their population and strength might seem to warrant. Whether they do so, depends largely on the vitality of their social and intellectual life and the demands they make on their governments to represent them adequately.

It is hoped to announce the result of *Landfall's* Prose Award in the March number.

EARLE SPENCER

# *Mira : a Portrait*

i

This rib, harvest and terror and crowning glory,
Woman, hammered and knit in fit furnaces
Of wind, mountain, and Pacific Ocean lapping
New Zealand, ice, and the green-capped antipodes
Flung down juicy and young by canoes, gods,
Myths, and warnings; her skin like woodwind, soft,
And brown like fern-frond, soft, and glowing like fruit,
Soft, peach, soft, plum, soft.
On tiny waterfalls her fingers hesitate before
Questioning creepers and bays and the gaudy bush
Chickens. Her breath makes a long smoke that blankets
A forest and lends a million colours to the sunrise.

ii

The carillon of the sea startles the long-legged
Sea birds who pirouette and hang in the air above Te Hapua.
The voices of a thousand sea shells whisper
Of spars and widows to a girl in the wind.
Who will ride gladly over the burning ocean the sun
Falls into to worship at the feet of this young girl
Growing among her dreams and distance. The fallen hills
Weep down to the throbbing shore with oil of tree-fern
And myrrh of pohutukawa. The grasses on the beach
Are curt and bitter with salt spray and will not bend
Around the feathers and afternoons she loses forever,
And will not whisper as the shells whisper or the hills
Whisper, of a swan nodding in the bay, or the centuries
In golden robes, singing like brides on the horizon.

iii

The sun whistled down from a crag like a great bird
And took her there on the beach. The battering cock-crow

Clamped her heart to weathers of driftwood and a ruined
Culture but within that tent of purple feathers
She saw past and future translated into her own coasts.
And now she is a country, a land of plenty, and the birds
Of every love she has ever inhabited since the plaited
Trumpets brayed her first marriage on the sand
Tell her inheritance: a young girl dreaming, green
And salt-fresh, the caverns of the sea tolling
Time and tempest, the sun's clarion singing
In the poor flesh, and a princess growing, and her people
Waiting, and the tongues on fire, and already her memory
Described and charted blood by blood in the stars.

MAURICE SHADBOLT

# *End of Season*

## I

SHADOWY figures moved restlessly back and forward in the sunless liniment-smelling interior of the dressing shed. Street clothes were stripped and folded, giving way to royal blue jerseys and crisp white shorts; shoeless feet slid into striped stockings and polished-black boots; headgear was strapped, pads adjusted. A brisk murmur of conversation filled the small, cramped room. Ian was tightening the cord of his shorts; Cedric fumbled with a long bootlace.

Sammy stood in the doorway, framed darkly against the light. His boots chattered impatiently on the sprig-pocked wooden floor while he tumbled the taut oval ball from hand to hand.

—You two right? he said. He grinned: a broad white smile in a clear-skinned maori face.

—In a second, Cedric said softly, still struggling nervously with the bootlace.

Tucking in his jersey, Ian straightened up.

—Here, Sammy said.

He flicked the ball to Ian: it took him by surprise and hit hard into his stomach. He fell back onto a bench, making only the one small sound of despair.

—Sorry boy, Sammy said, rushing forward to catch him as he fell.

—I'm all right, Ian said, breathing with difficulty.

Sammy sat on the bench, his arm round Ian.

—Sorry. You feeling better now?

Fighting for breath, Ian smiled weakly and looked up into Cedric's concerned face; other players had gathered round.

—She's right, he said at last. That'll teach me to be quicker, eh?

—Gosh I'm sorry, Sammy said.

—She's right. For God's sake what's all the fuss?

Losing interest, the other players moved away, leaving only Sammy and Cedric.

—You better have a rest, Cedric said in a thin, agitated voice.

—I'm all right.

—Have a rest, Sammy said. You'll feel better then.

—Can't you two leave me alone? Ian demanded. You're like two bloody fussy old women. Give me that ball.

Cedric picked the ball off the floor and reluctantly handed it to him.

Rising suddenly to his feet, Ian tucked the ball under his arm in one neat, practised movement and broke between them to race out the door of the shed: they followed.

They clattered down the shed-ramp, onto the springy turf and into the pale sunlight, gathering speed and swinging the ball from hand to hand in a practice passing movement.

Now, a few minutes before the main game of the afternoon, more people, moving under a blue mist of tobacco smoke, found seats in the long, low stand: soon it was filled to capacity. The crowd had long ago lost interest in the dull play of the curtain-raiser; they talked hopefully about the better game expected to come. Some looked out, but not at the tired striped marionettes jigging pointlessly within the white-bordered oblong of green; instead they watched the three bluejerseyed figures practising at the far end of the field, beyond the goalposts. They watched particularly the tall fine-figured maori who made each intricate manoeuvre of his own seem without effort as he rolled the ball fluidly from hand to hand and spun through myriad invisible attackers, always speeding the ball away before they threatened to bring him to the ground. After him they noticed the two pakehas, harder to

notice perhaps because they were the same in colouring and almost in build, and because at first sight they seemed only adjuncts, even if necessary ones, to the supple brown-legged figure who moved magnetlike between them. Closer notice of the pakehas would reveal differences: one darkhaired, stronger-figured, easier in movement; the other brownhaired with freckled face and a thinly-shaped body which hinted of onetime illness. It was he who, though endeavouring to move as quickly and as cleanly as his friends, would betray himself with an unsureness or a mistake: it was not hard to see that one caused the other, though which caused which would be hard to tell.

In a tight cluster at the side of the stand, the Waitete team, smart and fresh in green and white, only half-listened to their coach murmuring last-minute instructions. Watching the three beyond the goalposts, they talked in low voices.

—Sammy's going well today.

—He looks all right.

—He'll be all right too. Don't worry about that. I'm glad I'm not marking him. Look at that—took that pass right up off the toe of his boot. Didn't stop for a second.

—You reckon he'll make the North Island reps one day?

—I'll go he if he doesn't. And you want to know something? One fine day and you'll be reading about Sammy Kahu the All Black. Nothing surer, boy.

—That freckle-face one—Cedric. He's a bit slow off the mark isn't he?

—Funny how those three stick together, isn't it? Thick as thieves.

The Waitete coach was growing impatient and annoyed.

—What about a bit of politeness from yous at the back there? Or aren't yous interested in winning the game, eh? You want to play as well as that maori-boy over there? Well you better listen to what I'm trying to knock into your thick bloody skulls.

Despite its dampness, they fell on the turf, loosened muscles quivering, the cool air stinging down into their heaving lungs.

—You think we'll be all right? Cedric asked, sitting up, a fidgeting hand beginning to pluck at blades of grass.

—Sure thing, Sammy said.

—I'm damned if I know, Ian said. Their forwards have been getting pretty smart lately.

—Yeah, Sammy said, rolling onto his back and lazily stretching long arms. But I wouldn't go worrying about it.

—You can't win games on a back-line forever, Ian argued. That's

what we've been doing, haven't we?

—We'll be all right, Sammy murmured without interest.

—I wish you weren't so bloody happy about everything. You're riding for a fall, Sammy old boy.

—I never seen such a person for panicking before a game, Sammy said. All right, so we got slow forwards. But they're doing their best, aren't they? So what's the use of worrying? If we win today and beat Ohemai next Saturday and win the competition, well that's all right. If we don't, well that's too bad. It's no use worrying now.

—My God, Ian said. I wish I could be like you. You ever worry about anything?—at all?

Sammy rose lightly to his feet: standing tall above them, he grinned down.

—What's the good? he said. Anyhow it's nearly all over now.

—You're bloody hopeless, Ian muttered. I suppose we'll win the championship next Saturday just so you can prove we can win without worrying.

—That's dead right.

Serious faced, Cedric looked from Sammy to Ian.

—I wouldn't worry too much, Ian, he said quietly.

—My God. Not you too.

They walked back to where the team was beginning to gather round Mr Bennett, the coach.

—Well, Sammy, Mr Bennett said, coughing as though about to make an important suggestion. But he only added:

—Not too bad a day after all, eh?

—Not too bad, Sammy agreed.

Mr Bennett coughed again, nervously.

—I'd play into the sun in the first half if you win the toss, he said after a few moments' hesitation. Then it'll be more direct on to them in the second.

—I was thinking that myself, Sammy said.

Ian looked away: it was embarrassing watching the scene. Since Sammy had been made team captain Mr Bennett's position had become more and more a formality. Though he'd been a rep player earlier in his life, he had become too conscious of Sammy's superior knowledge and ability: now he was impotent as coach, without confidence in himself. Yet he showed no resentment; he looked on Sammy as a schoolmaster might have looked fondly on a star pupil, even if the pupil had overstepped the mark—though quietly and never ostentatiously—to take over the position of master himself.

A drawnout whistle-blast announced the end of the curtain-

raiser, and tired players, after a weak outburst of applause, trudged away to the sheds. A new, shriller whistle sounded, and the Lions and Waitete teams jogged out in two straggling lines. Waitete won the toss: they prepared to take the kick; the Lions spaced out to defend. Ian, Sammy and Cedric stood together in the back-line, at second five-eighths, centre and wing.

Everything was ready now, each player frozen into position, waiting. The whistle exploded in the referee's mouth: the Waitete captain ran forward, kicked, and the ball lifted high.

In the end it was an easier game than they had expected. They had only just managed to defeat Waitete in an earlier round of the competition. But this time, after an even first half—the score then at six points each—Sammy, talking quietly and casually while chewing his halftime orange, had somehow persuaded the forwards to play more tightly. When the game resumed they began to feed the ball more cleanly to the backs; within minutes Sammy made the best of an opening and sent Cedric over the Waitete line to score. Kicking with unhurried precision, Sammy converted the try. Two other tries followed in quick succession, both the result of well-timed back movement; Sammy converted both. The final and most spectacular try of the day was Sammy's alone. Nimbly retrieving the ball while it ran dangerously loose almost on the Lions goal-line, he side-stepped and dummied his way through a confusion of Waitete players, narrowly avoiding several tackles—and, leaping high, jumped one determined Waitete man to speed the full length of the field and score.

Sammy lingered behind, congratulating the forwards on their play, while Cedric and Ian left the field together.

—I don't like the way he jumped that last tackle, Ian said suddenly. It's too damn dangerous.

Cedric was silent, breathing with difficulty.

—It only needs to go wrong once, Ian said. Then you break your neck. Remember that All Black? The halfback? He jumped one tackle too many.

Cedric came to a halt, concern spreading over his face.

—You better talk to him, he said. Tell him.

Ian threw up his hands, despairingly.

—You know how much good that'll do. He's just too bloody sure of himself, that's his trouble.

Later, as they emerged, showered and changed, into the long-shadowed sunlight, Sammy was cheerful.

—Ohemai next week and we'll be drinking out of the big cup, eh?

—If you don't break your silly bloody neck, Ian said.

—What's the matter now?

—You're the matter. Jumping that last tackle.

—I never seen a person like you. Always got something to worry about. You ever seen anyone like him, Ceddie?

—You could be a bit more careful, Cedric said. You might hurt yourself, jumping tackles.

—Where we going tonight? Sammy said. Pictures? Dance? Party? Come on Ian, where's all your bright ideas?

—Bloody hopeless, Ian muttered. Just bloody hopeless.

They climbed into Ian's old-model Ford, which was parked near the gate: a loose cage of ribbed canvas on a sagging metal chassis. As the engine jerked into life and began to idle, Ian lit a cigarette and said:

—What's first on the agenda? A beer at my place?

—My cows, I think, Sammy said. It's getting late.

—Cows? Ian said. My God—I've just worked out the only thing you ever worry about. Cows.

—We'll help you with the milking, Cedric said quietly.

—There's no need, Sammy said. Thanks all the same.

—No trouble, Ian said. While we're giving you a hand we'll work out what we'll do tonight.

Sammy was silent a moment, then grinned.

—Good thing, he said. You fellas want to win all the arguments, eh?

—I've never noticed any danger of that, Ian said. The car kicked forward: he turned it out the gate and in the direction of the Kahu farm.

## 7

There was, first of all, the argument with his father over the dinner-table. It was nothing important; their arguments no longer had great importance. But he left soon after it, the anger still tingling his body, to find relief in the cool night air which rushed steadily over his face as he drove away from the house. The sky was lit with the town's Friday-night glow: he passed trickles of shoppers leaving or returning to their cream-and-red homes with neat gardens and trim hedges: against the dark shape of hills above the town, the main highway showed as a long thin slant of descending farmers' headlights.

He tried to think of something else: the game tomorrow, the end of season. And the winning of the championship, if they defeated Ohemai, with whom they stood equal on the competition ladder at this last minute. But that thought, now, did nothing to relieve his mood of depression. He could watch the season end only with a sense of regret. Next season would be different; it would see Sammy's steady individual rise up the ladder of representative football. Then their old combination—Sammy, Cedric and himself—would be broken for the first time, perhaps never to really mend again. And without Sammy, he and Cedric would be just two players, that was all. The old days were gone. He might as well face that fact now.

He came to the main street. Along the pavements, crowds eddied and idled and swirled, criss-crossing shadows before the bright-lighted squares of shop windows. He paused before a swarm of traffic till an opening came, and then he drove across town in the direction of the *Gazette* office.

Yet he realized it wasn't the first time that he'd had this sensation of their being drawn apart: the first was their move from primary to secondary school. Until then Sammy and he had been together in the classroom, always sitting together, sharing together. Their rivalry was a teachers' joke: they were always in high class positions. Cedric lingered well below, only retaining his position even there, somewhere below mid-way, because Sammy patiently helped him with schoolwork. Then all that was changed suddenly the year they moved into secondary: now they had to make a choice of course and career. He hadn't doubted that Sammy would move into the academic course with him. He hadn't considered Cedric, who would naturally not be taking the academic course. And he hadn't considered the Kahu farm, a ragged sprawl of maori land, or the two old people who lived there alone with Sammy now that all the other sons had married and moved away because the farm was not enough to support them. He hadn't considered those things, Cedric or Sammy's parents or the farm, so he hadn't doubted Sammy would choose the academic course for his own good. And so he, like Sammy's teachers, had been shocked when Sammy casually announced that he intended to take the agricultural-general course, the other alternative, along with Cedric. The teachers argued with Sammy, speaking of university, perhaps a professional career beyond. But he knew better than to argue; he said nothing. And so now they were split, for the first time: Sammy and Cedric in one classroom, himself in another. Hurt and self-dramatic, he told himself it was all over then; it could never

be the same again. But he was wrong. They grew used to the new arrangement of their school lives. They met in the lunch-hour and after school and on weekends; they played for the same school team, their threesome moving quickly into the school's first fifteen to become a winning combination. Sammy seemed happy enough in his chosen course, with clover and lucerne instead of French and Latin.

Two years afterwards Cedric left school. His father, notoriously mean, had hardly been able to wait until he was old enough to leave. When the time came he took Cedric straight into his hardware store, a musty cave in a decayed wooden side-street building where Cedric, in a khaki apron, smiling his shy uncertain smile, served behind a cluttered counter, beneath strings of garden tools and seed-packets and mounting shelves of nails and hinges, pipes and milk-buckets. Soon after Sammy also left. On the farm with his parents now, he planned and reorganized, full of new ideas to bring the land into shape again.

So once again it seemed all over. His first impulse was to leave school too. Throwing over all ideas of going on to university, he made application for a job on the *Gazette*: this in defiance of his parents, who had worked hard and saved so that he could have a full education. When he was offered the job, they refused him permission to leave. Grudgingly, even while knowing they were really right in their stand, he settled into study again. It was all over, he kept telling himself. A barrier grew now, but of his own making: he was embarrassed when, after school, wearing his heavy navy-blue serge shirt and shorts, he met Sammy and Cedric in their long trousers and sports coats. He began to make a practice of hurrying home directly after school—on those occasions when he knew he was likely to see them—so he could change from school uniform into grey slacks and light shirt and meet them on equal terms. Vague resentments and jealousies stirred in him every time he saw Sammy and Cedric together; at nights he argued bitterly with his parents, conducting an obscure campaign of revenge against them. Afterwards, retreating to his bedroom, leaving his mother quietly weeping and his father's hoarse voice still raging, he would torture himself with self-accusations; bewildered at his own sudden self-hate, he would fall forward onto the bed, his face buried in the pillow, his throat constricting against the dry sobs which shuddered his body. But in time he realized he had been wrong again: it was not all over, after all. They met mostly on weekends now. The three of them played together in the Lions third-grade team, then in the seconds, and, later still, in the seniors:

their friendship began to centre on those weekly games through each season. But at home something of the initial bitterness remained: there were the occasional explosions when he demanded again that he leave school, when he argued with his parents cruelly and pointlessly.

When he matriculated, he hadn't done as everyone expected and gone to the city to enrol at university; instead he went again to the *Gazette* office and took the job which had waited two years for him. He explained that there was no hurry, no real need for him to move straight on to university: a break would do him good. And he was content to tell himself that, after all, he had always wanted to write, and that a newspaper was probably the best place to learn. That was three years ago: since then his parents had ceased to plead for university; they had fallen back, defeated. Each year he told himself next year: next year he would go to the city, perhaps get a job on a city paper, and attend university. But he made small excuses to put off the move. He might as well face the fact now: it wasn't that he didn't want to go; it was easier not to have to make the choice. But now it was time to do something. Everything seemed to point to it: the new argument with his father was still fresh in his mind, and tomorrow was the end of season. The old half-promises had begun to stir alive again. It was time to do something, anything.

The noisy traffic and busy crowds were behind him now: but tomorrow the same people, from all over the countryside, would descend on the town again, but this time for the game: the game. He wished he could forget it.

He drove down a quiet back street and parked the car outside the darkened *Gazette* office. He walked slowly and thoughtfully across the footpath and up the steps to the entrance, jingling coins in his pocket as he fumbled for the key to the door.

When work on the farm had finished for the day, Sammy accepted a neighbour's offer of a ride into town. After a few small purchases, he called round to the *Gazette* office, where Ian had said he'd be working late. He moved cautiously through the wide entrance and walked soft-footed down a narrow faint-lighted passage, the irregular crackering of a solitary typewriter sounding louder in his ears. He gently pushed open the door to Ian's tiny office: under a shaded yellow light, behind a littered desk, Ian sat absorbed in typing, head down, tie loosened, hair wisping over his forehead. Silent, Sammy remained in the doorway, watching.

Paused a moment in his work, his attention caught suddenly—

perhaps a murmuring floorboard, a movement at the edge of his vision—Ian looked up, startled.

—Say something next time. You gave me a hell of a fright.

—You know something? Sammy said, grinning.

—What?

—You look just like one of those ace reporters in the pictures.

Sammy's rich laughter swelled to fill the room as he stepped inside and closed the door. Confused and embarrassed, Ian smiled faintly, lowering his eyes. Sammy edged round the desk to peer over his shoulder.

—What's all the hot news, eh?

—There's none here.

Sammy glanced at the typewritten sheets of copypaper strewn untidily over the desk.

—What's all this about?

—It's a feature story.

—A feature story, eh? Sammy nodded uncertainly. Sounds pretty good. What's it all about?

—It's on the district. I'm going to try and sell it to a city paper. You know the kind of thing—a general commentary on the district. Nothing new, really.

—Then what're you writing it for?

Ian shifted uncomfortably in his seat, conscious of the steady probe of Sammy's eyes over his shoulder.

—Because it might make me a bit of money. And having it published might be a help when I apply for a job on a city paper—it'd pave the way.

As he spoke he quickly began to gather together the pages of the story. Sammy anticipated him, picking up one of the pages before he could reach for it.

—What's all this? About run-down maori farmland?

He snatched the page from Sammy.

—What's wrong? Sammy said.

—Nothing.

—Eh?

—Nothing. I just don't like people reading what I write until I've had a chance to revise it.

—Gosh, you're pretty touchy tonight.

—I'm tired. A bit nervy about tomorrow.

Sammy patted him on the shoulder.

—I'm sorry, anyhow. I wouldn't have looked if I knew you didn't want me to see it. And don't worry about tomorrow. We'll be all right.

Ian forced a smile.

—All the hot news then, eh? Sammy said, his hand resting on Ian's shoulder. When we drink beer out of that big cup.

Ian felt a momentary unease under the slight relaxed pressure of Sammy's hand: the chair-legs gave a thin cry as he jerked the chair back from the table. The hand fell away, and he stood up, straightening his tie and combing his hair.

—I hope so. Be too bad if we didn't win it now. What's say we run down to the milkbar now and have supper?

—Well, Sammy began.

—What's wrong?

—Well, I thought we might wait until Ceddie's old man closes his shop. Then the three of us could have something together.

—That's half an hour yet, Ian said impatiently, glancing at his watch.

—Not long, Sammy said quietly. Let's have a look round the shops.

—He's a bloody nuisance, Ian said. Why doesn't he finish work at a reasonable hour?

Sammy was silent. Ian struggled into a sports coat and switched out the light. It was always like this, he thought; Cedric was always there to get in the way. Outside, on the footpath, they paused to look up at the sky. An occasional star flickered weakly between dark clouds.

—Pretty hard to tell, Ian said. It might be all right. But it looks like there might be rain before morning.

—Yes, Sammy said. It's pretty hard to tell, all right.

Though the store closed at nine, Cedric's father kept him behind for twenty minutes to wrap some parcels. When he finally emerged he found the two of them still waiting in the car. They drove to the milkbar: there they drank milkshakes, talked in a desultory fashion, and decided it was getting late. Cedric was driven home first.

—Straight to bed now, Sammy said after Cedric had murmured goodnight and slipped from the car. Don't forget tomorrow.

In the feeble light from the dashboard they saw Cedric's bare, tight smile as he stood at the door.

—I haven't forgotten, he said. Don't worry about that.

—I'll call for you, Ian said.

—Thanks. Goodnight.

He turned, almost breathlessly, and hurried into the darkness.

They heard his feet quickly crunching up the gravel path to his home.

—He's pretty nervous, Ian said as the car moved off.

—He'll be all right. I'll have a talk to him before the game.

The Kahu farm lay three miles beyond the town limits. There was silence between them as the car slid off asphalt paving onto rough road, as it jigged and rocked over potholes, and small stones spurted and rattled. The headlights fanned over a rippling sea of shadowed corrugations, lighting overhanging gorse and manuka into white silhouettes.

—You been thinking a lot about a job on a city paper, eh? Sammy said finally as they neared the farm.

—A bit.

—How soon you think you'll be going?

—I haven't thought about it. It depends.

Shrugging, he held the wheel firmly and looked straight ahead. Presently the car rolled up to the farm's front gate. Sammy pushed open his door.

—Sleep well, Ian said.

—You too, eh? I don't want any of your crook passes tomorrow.

—You've got to win the game. Not me.

—You too.

Sammy paused, then added quietly:

—And stop worrying about those big time city papers. You'll be all right then.

Once home, he went directly to bed. But it was a long time before he found the sleep he wanted. Turning restlessly between the stiff coldness of the sheets, his eyes opened to the darkness, he remembered his unease before Sammy in the office. Gathering the limp pages to cover them from sight like something shameful, he'd made the lame excuse that the story hadn't been revised: a lie. He'd revised it three times already. Then why shouldn't he let Sammy read it?

It was useless trying to sleep. He snapped on the light-switch, blinking against the sudden burn of the bulb. The clock said nearly midnight. He flicked back the switch, crumpled the pillow to prop himself upright, and lit a cigarette.

Because Sammy might have seen through the sham—wasn't that it? Of course. The part Sammy had glimpsed—what was it? All the old stupid clichés about the maori land problem served up again, half-truths recited glibly for tired minds which were

too willing to confirm all they already believed about lazy maoris on withering land. You didn't write truth that way, repeating what others had said before you: you only made the lie bigger. Truth was much harder to find; even harder to sell. And how did his weak clichés stand up beside Sammy? He remembered how he had come upon Sammy once. After a fruitless call at the Kahu farmhouse, he took a long walk over back paddocks looking for him. Some smoke rising lazily into the hot summer air attracted his attention. He mounted a rise, and found Sammy just below him: he was working to clear out a thick patch of gorse which slanted, in dull bronze and faded yellow, down to the riverside. Stripped to the waist, sweat gleaming over his smooth skin, he stood knee-deep in fallen stalks, the muscles of his back rippling rhythmically as the slasher rose and fell. Nearby, a dwindled fire of earlier-cut gorse curled thin wisps of blue smoke around Sammy as he worked. He could remember the scene as though he had only just left it: the dry smell of summer, the harsh heat of the sun, the tall easy movements of the brown figure among the threads of smoke, the swish and chop of the slasher, the sway and fall of gorse: and, beneath the spread feet, beneath the confusion of tumbled stalks and bleeding roots, along the wide channel carved into the gorse, the recovered land. Why couldn't he write about that, then? Why had he written what he had? He'd blurted the answer out to Sammy already: for money, for a better job. And because it was easier to write that way, with the only words he knew. What could be simpler? And what if Sammy had been allowed to read the story? He would have been silent: he would have shuffled the pages together tidily and set them down quietly and turned away, hurt and reproach hidden behind his dark eyes. And there would have been reproach enough in that.

Suddenly Sammy's final words, spoken softly as they parted at the farm gate, assumed a new meaning: *And stop worrying about the big time city papers.* Of course. Sammy hadn't really needed to read the story; he already knew what was happening. Then why hadn't he seen it himself? The answer came quickly: because he had just seen himself through Sammy's eyes, that was all. Seen the cheapness.

In a tired half-world of confused thoughts, his self-confidence seemed to ebb away. Perhaps, if you had to be cheap and nasty, the thing was not to worry about it. Not to worry at all—then everything would be easy. And why should he be worrying now? Because of what Sammy might think? So the first thing was to

forget everyone else. You had to learn not to worry about other people. Just remember yourself. Then everything would start to get really easy. It was funny when you came to think about it, how easy it was to remember just yourself. The rest could look after themselves. Easy.

And what was more, he thought finally with a small stab of surprise, you could almost fool yourself, thinking that way . . . . He fumbled for the light-switch again: squinting through the dazzle he saw that the clock-hands had moved to two o'clock. Not much more than twelve hours before the game now. He heard rain shower lightly on the roof for a few minutes, then cease. Suddenly, curiously, he remembered the slight pressure of the hand on his shoulder as Sammy stood beside his chair in the office. Then tiredness seeped through his relaxed limbs, and the darkness closed in.

When he drove out of town late that morning, he braked by the field. It was close to the river, and over it still lay a slow-dissolving lake of risen mist. Through the young macrocarpas which hedged the field from the road he could see, obtruding darkly, the long stand, the tall goalposts and the two crazy-roofed dressing sheds. He looked upwards: a faint brightness of sun had begun to show through a hazy roof of low cloud. He paused there a moment, the engine idling, while he lit a cigarette: bent down in the seat, cupping his hands around the warm flare of the match, he thought he heard, above the engine-sound, a high-pitched voice, the strong thud of a kicked ball. Looking up, he saw that the gate to the field hung loosely open. He snapped off the ignition and in the quivering silence that followed there came, positively, a shrill burst of boyish laughter. The Ford creaked on its old springs as he kicked open the door and jumped out. Damp grass swishing under his feet, he walked to the gate.

At the other end of the field, shadows in the mist, several young boys wheeled and dived noisily, tussling for possession of a miniature ball. There was no pattern in their play, for they were not divided into teams. Each boy played for himself alone, his only object to seize and retain the ball for himself as long as he could. It was not really a game, but a pointless scramble. They had not heard his car halt, nor yet had they seen him at the gate: they were playing in defiance of a number of notices erected round the field which warned against its unauthorized use.

Leaning on the gatepost now, letting smoke thread through his nostrils and snake out into the still air, he remembered Sammy and

himself—strangers then, both eight years old, and he a newcomer to a country school from the city, one who had never really known a maori boy before—playing in the same kind of thing. After a while there had been the first hesitant smiles, sidelong and secretive, the clumsy schoolboyish overtures of friendship which helped a partnership slowly emerge from the confusion: Sammy passing the ball to him, he kicking in Sammy's direction, so the games at last assumed a pattern and a meaning, the two against the others. Time did the rest, sealing the friendship so that they were seldom seen or known apart. But then, almost suddenly, there were no longer two, but three: added was the silent one, the unnoticed and unsuspected one, the shy admirer of Sammy who had always lingered somewhere in the background. Even now, from this distance of time, he could remember clearly that first day when Sammy wheedled and coaxed like a hen with weakling chick, persuading Cedric to play with them, smoothing away nervousness with encouraging whispers and smiles: and, later, Sammy's proudness at Cedric's returned smile. At first, hurt and jealous, he resented the new claim on Sammy. And even when the first warmth of the resentment had cooled, there lingered the inability to fully accept the newcomer; to accept the three instead of two. But that was how it had been through all their years of growth: the three of them—

One of the boys had seen him. A cry of alarm, thin through the calm morning air, shrilled to panic. The ball was dropped and then recovered again, clutched into a trembling body and carried swiftly away by the scamper of small feet.

He wanted to call out that it was all right: they could play there as long as they liked for all he cared. But it was too late. Their voices mingling loud, fading fast, they vanished between the trees at the far end of the field, leaving behind the healing silence.

—the three of them. Did he accept that now? That was a stupid question. Of course he did. He wasn't a kid any more. He'd got over that kind of thing. Of course—

He let the burning stub of his cigarette fall to the grass; there was a soft hiss as it died. He looked upward: squinting now against the stronger light.

—of course. He accepted it. There just couldn't be any question of it. Not now. Not now when it was probably almost over.

He realized suddenly that he was still staring idly at the deserted piece of field where the boys had tumbled in their noisy game. He shook his head, as if to awake himself, and turned slowly away, closing the gate. There really wasn't much point in doing that:

only another hour or two and the crowd would begin streaming in for the game: not long at all.

The engine coughed and trembled and the car moved easily out onto the road again. The houses of the town began to thin and straggle, giving way finally to occasional farmhouses crouched in huddles of sheds, hedges, trees, lawns and gardens, small jutting islands on the rise and fall of green pasture which sloped gradually and unevenly back into rippled foothills and upheaved and broken ranges, bush-stripped, patchy with second-growth and erosion, hazy with cloud and distance. The road slid through a clay cutting, mounted a rise, descended again. He saw below the rich patch-worked pasture-pattern of the Saunders farm. Soon the dark pine shelter-belts were beginning to divide before the windscreen, and he glimpsed the old white farmhouse set back behind the trees. The thought of the approaching game jerked alive in his mind again. The Saunders family had for a long time been linked with the Lions team. Clem, the oldest son and a firm ruler of the lives of the other four children of the fatherless family, had been captain of the senior team before he gave up rugby to devote all his time to the farm. Fred Saunders, the next oldest in the family, played for the Lions now, at first five-eighths, inside Ian.

Their sister Margaret was at the front gate, collecting the morning's newspaper and mail. She waved, smiling: he braked. As she walked towards the car, he noticed her clothing, curiously unfeminine for her: yet the patched khaki trousers tucked into muddied gumboots and the faded tight-fitting man's shirt seemed somehow to enhance her determined darkhaired attractiveness.

—Hullo, he said. Anyone want a lift to town? I'll be coming back with Sammy in a little while.

—No thanks. We'll all be going in with Clem. You didn't think any of us'd be missing the game, did you?

—Not really, he said.

The admission made him uncomfortable; the offer of a lift was too obviously an excuse for stopping and talking with her.

—I suppose I'll be seeing you at the dance tonight, she said, still smiling serenely.

—Too right. That's when we'll be collecting that big cup.

—You sure about that?

—Positive.

—That's good. Brother Fred's had the jitters all morning.

—He shouldn't be worried. I'm certainly not.

In the pause that followed he wished he could reach out and retrieve the boastful words and put something more honest in

their place. Her grey eyes regarded him quizzically.

—Well, she repeated, I'll see you there tonight.

For the second time he was tempted to ask her to go to the dance with him: she'd hinted plainly enough that she'd like him to ask. For the second time he thrust the thought aside.

—Yes, he said, I'll be seeing you there, all right.

Giving a small wave, she backed away from the car as the wheels began to turn, crunching over loose metal. He didn't wave back; with eyes fixed ahead, he brought the car to speed, sitting back stiffly as trees and fence-posts and grazing cattle began to fleet past again, remembering her questioning grey eyes and feeling the still-warm flush in his cheeks. Why shouldn't he have asked her? Why did he have to fumble everything he said to her? He wasn't shy, surely: he knew her well enough now. He remembered the time—as he often unwillingly remembered it, painfully in its exact detail—when they stole out from a Saturday night dance together: they were away nearly an hour; an hour spent in the deep shadow of the moonlit riverside trees, the two of them resting on the dry summer grass, their bodies close and aware but not yet touching, the red tips of their cigarettes glowing and fading while they talked softly. He was timid at first; she unobtrusively confident, more experienced, unembarrassed as he buried his face nervously in the soft scented curve of her neck. And it was she, still carefully in control, who had called a halt when it was needed.

—We better go back, she said suddenly, gently easing him away and sitting up. Or big brother Clem'll be after you with a shotgun.

And when they rose—straightening crumpled clothing, brushing away dry grass and dead leaves—he had the first obscure stirrings of guilt, unreasonable and suffocating. Her moist lips darted coolly against his cheek; she took his hand.

—Come on. Don't stand there looking silly.

Fallen leaves whisking beneath their feet, she led him between trees and beneath overhanging branches and out onto the road: they walked back to the hall.

—You ought to go to the city, she said. You're wasting your time in a little dump like this.

—I don't know.

—Of course you are. Or're you too blind to see it?

—I think I'll be here a while yet. I don't mind it so much.

—You're mad. You don't know what's good for you. You rot in places like this. I'll tell you one thing—I'm not going to stay out there with those damn cows forever. I don't want to get like Clem with that small-town mind of his. I'm going to clear out as soon

as I'm twenty-one. I'd go now, if only they'd let me. Clem always talks Mum out of it. But I'll go, don't worry. What's got into you, anyhow? Didn't you tell me once you were going to get a job on a city paper and go to university?—or've you forgotten all that?

He was silent.

—Anyhow, she said with finality. I know what your trouble is.

—What d'you mean?

—It doesn't matter, she said.

—What're you getting at?

—Nothing. Forget about it. Please.

And. back in the hall, under the eye-stinging dazzle of lights, he saw Sammy and Cedric sitting in a corner, talking quietly while dancing couples slid past them. Suddenly Margaret's curious words were forgotten; the feeling returned, even more unreasonable, even more suffocating. He found release from it as he murmured an excuse to her and hurried away, moving quickly between the swirl of dancers and towards the two in the corner, feeling a burning in his cheeks and already inventing a story to explain his long absence from the hall. Later in the evening, sitting now between Sammy and Cedric, he glanced across the floor and accidentally met her eyes. She smiled. Something annoyed him about the smile, but he didn't know why. He caught it twice more that evening: now he imagined he saw it at every encounter with her: he imagined he'd seen it this morning and he wished he'd said something about the city, something that might justify himself in her eyes. But he didn't know why he should need to justify himself.

Unsheltered, stilted up on high foundations, the Kahu house stood in a flat open space of swampy country. It was small and boxlike, unpainted, with a sagging front verandah. Cowbails and several old sheds of varying sizes stood to the rear: circling the whole group of buildings was a thin line of recently-planted young trees, touched with a new green. Fences spoked out over the unattractive land: some twisted and half-fallen, others, newly-wired, spearing stiffly upright. Cows grazed, slack-bellied after spring birth or still heavy with calf. As he nosed the Ford up the drive to the house, he saw a slim figure in white, small with distance, detach itself from the rear of the building, scramble through a fence and hurry across a back paddock. Bewildered suddenly, trying to focus new thoughts, he said to himself: Weri. Of course: Weri Whitiora. He should have felt no surprise at seeing her: her people lived on the next farm, another maori place; the Whitioras and Kahus were good neighbours. Then why should he be surprised? Things were

starting to get on his mind too much, he told himself: either that, or he'd been thinking too much about Margaret, or something. But it was funny the things that occurred to you sometimes.

Weri was the same age as Sammy, Cedric, Margaret and himself: they had been at school together. If anyone among them could be counted her close friend, it was probably Margaret. She was a strange girl, pretty enough in her way, but always too shy to be popular. He seemed to picture her always as solitary, seated motionless at the side of a dance hall, somewhere beyond the insistent wheedle of the orchestra, the scrape of feet and murmur of voices, her hands folded in her lap, her face placid, unimpatient. And yet that wasn't altogether a true picture: she was probably as much sought after as any other girl, but always without success. Her quiet maori reserve defeated everyone. He remembered dancing with her, trying to get her to talk but only receiving bare responses: nothing to carry the conversation any further, nothing even to encourage the making of conversation: the head always at the same shy tilt, her eyes lowered. Others had the same trouble: watching them dance with her he saw her same reserve, their same heightening embarrassment.

One Saturday night he thought he found the answer. He caught her staring across the dance-floor: at Sammy. Her expression calm and unchanged, her eyes never left him: immediately he felt he knew at last the reason for everything, for that expression, the reserve, the patience, the solitariness. She was hopelessly in love with Sammy, he thought—and Sammy took no notice of her. Perhaps Sammy even knew about it, and that was why he took no notice; he wanted to discourage her. It was all so obvious when he came to think about it; it explained everything, and the only curious thing was that he hadn't seen it before. Once or twice after that night he considered raising the subject with Sammy, just to see how much Sammy really knew. Unsure how to approach it, he had changed his mind. With Weri, Sammy shared that same strange maori reserve: he might have taken offence at the mention of the subject. Maoris were sometimes funny about things like that: it was often hard to understand their outlook. And yet wasn't everyone a little touchy about those things? How would he have felt, say, if Sammy had said anything, even obliquely, about Margaret?

And now, as the car rolled slowly up the rutted driveway, he couldn't understand why seeing Weri suddenly had so much disturbed him. Sammy came round to the front of the house and

jumped onto the running board as the wheels churned to a halt on greasy grass.

—Come inside and have a cup of tea, eh? The old lady's set the table for lunch. I told her we wouldn't be wanting anything to eat, not before the game. So she said you could have a cup of tea anyhow.

—That'll do me fine, Ian said, smiling and climbing from the car.

—How you feeling?

—Fine, fit as a fiddle. By the way, was that Weri I saw a second ago?

—That's right.

—How is she these days?

—All right. She just came over to borrow something.

If Sammy hadn't attempted to explain, it would have been easy to dismiss and forget Weri. But now the uneasy feeling had settled in his mind.

—Looks like we'll be getting a bit of sun after all, Sammy was saying.

The thought of the game returned with a tingling rush: there was a sudden sinking hollowness in his stomach, a dryness in his mouth. For the first time he noticed the rising drift of cloud, the sun beginning to yellow the hills at the back of the farm.

—Won't make much difference now, he said. Had a look at the field on my way over. Greasy as hell. Going to be a forwards' day today, all right. No fancy back movements with a slippery ball. And you know how tough their forwards—

—Forget about it, Sammy said softly. Don't worry.

—I'm not worrying. I was just saying—all right then, I'll shut up. If you say so.

—You're as jittery as a cat, Sammy said. You're even starting to worry me.

—That would be a bloody achievement, that would.

Sammy grinned. As they walked round the side of the house, Ian pointed to a stack of newly-dressed timber beside a sawbench.

—What's all this?

—Work, Sammy said.

—What's going on?

—Big job of carpentry. Going to fix up the house. I been so busy round the farm I been putting it off for years. I thought I might get onto it through spring and summer. I got ideas of new cowbails too. Depends whether I got time.

—You ever get time to sleep?

—Sleep? Sammy repeated, perplexed: then he saw the point and laughed.

—I get time to sleep, all right. I don't work all that hard. How d'you like my garden this year? Pretty good, eh?

Ian admired the neat weedless plots of flourishing vegetables which edged onto the narrow worn-earth path they followed round to the back of the house. He remembered the situation in reverse, the scene in the office the night before, Sammy looking at his work. He had a new impulse to explain away his refusal to let Sammy see the story; he knew he could have done it, easily and glibly, in a way that might leave Sammy satisfied. But he didn't want to do it that way any more; he wanted to say what he really felt, say that he was sorry and that he'd changed his mind about the story, explain everything to Sammy. But there were no words to say what he wanted, and he was silent. Perhaps later: perhaps then he would have the words and be able to speak them. But not yet.

They climbed some rickety steps and entered the tiny kitchen-livingroom. It was dim inside, lit by only the one small window. Shapes grew: the big iron stove with its hidden glow; the well-scrubbed sinkbench; the large old table, unvarnished, now set neatly for a meal; the patchily-worn lino stretched over uneven floorboards; the sagging brilliantine-soiled settee, ridiculously large in the cramped room; the cracked shard of mirror tacked to the wall; the outdated picture-calendars and Sammy's football photographs.

Moving with a stolid, stooped grace, Mrs Kahu came across the room to greet him: her face was old and tired, her huge body left withered and lumpy after a life of childbirth and work. With an attentive, pleased smile, she guided him to his place at the table.

—And how's your Mum and Dad? she was saying.

—All right thanks.

It was always the first thing she asked: a ritual question which had to precede the mention of anything else: and his a ritual answer: *All right thanks.* Well, it was almost truthful: they were the same. The argument with his father last night had been harmless enough initially, conjured up out of nothing—perhaps a newspaper item, a passing reference in conversation, anything, he couldn't even remember now. And, as always, it had grown out of proportion and led to other things, exploding into shouts and abuse, leaving them limp and shaking after his mother's intervention. There had been few words spoken over the breakfast table this morning: perhaps the argument—for he realized now

it was a never-ending one, ready to be stirred into heat by the slightest of fuel—would begin again tonight or tomorrow, or the day after. After breakfast his mother had taken him aside, appealing to him, explaining *his heart, don't upset him, remember his heart, he's old and old people don't always understand young people, don't upset him, he's been a good father to you hasn't he? hasn't he always wanted to do what's best for you? I know he's only a working-man without much education but he's worked hard all his life to give you all the chances he never had, hasn't he? his heart, remember his heart, don't*—And then, unable to stand the tearful pleading of her face any longer, he had turned from her abruptly and walked away. Didn't they want to see his point of view, ever? He didn't want all these clashes. But they were forced on him, that was all. Simply because they'd given him life and all the best they could offer they refused to acknowledge his right to think differently. Perhaps it would be best to get away. As soon as he could. It was the best reason of all for going to the city. Yes, they were *All right thanks.*

—That's a good thing, said Mrs Kahu. Give them my regards, won't you?

Mr Kahu was already seated at the table. But, supporting himself on his walking-stick, he rose slowly and courteously to shake hands with Ian. His hand was rough and dry to touch; his wrinkled face was folded into a smile.

—The best of luck for this afternoon, he said in a deep voice.

—Thanks. I think we'll be needing all the luck we can get.

They all sat down. Mrs Kahu poured the tea.

—Did you see the work Samuel's starting on the house? she asked.

—Yes, I saw it.

—He's a good boy, she said. A good boy.

—Ian doesn't want to hear all that, Sammy said.

—There's nothing to be ashamed of being a good boy to his people. Is there, Ian? Eh? I was just saying to Weri—

—It doesn't matter about that, Sammy said with sudden sharpness.

Mrs Kahu's teacup chattered nervously on its saucer: she looked hurt and bewildered.

—What's wrong? What's wrong with what I said to Weri, eh?

—It doesn't matter, Sammy said, his voice softening. Let's talk about something else.

—I don't know why Samuel's ashamed of being a good boy to

his people, Mrs Kahu said. Eh? Eh Ian? You're not ashamed of being a good boy to your people, are you eh?

## 3

The first half had been heated. The blackjerseyed Ohemai forwards, all large and heavy, kept the ball in tight play, trying to overwhelm their lighter opposition. Only rarely, when the ball ran loose, did the Lions backs have a chance: twice they were halted just short of the Ohemai goal-line. But most of the half consisted of prolonged and formless scrambles round a slithering ball. Tempers frayed. In one agonized ruck the referee glimpsed a blue arm swing down a rabbit-punch: Ohemai were awarded a penalty kick on the Lions twenty-five. While Sammy quietly reproved the offending forward, the ball spun cleanly between their goalposts and Ohemai took the lead at three points to nothing. Then it was halftime and they trudged slowly to the sideline and tumbled thankfully on the grass, breathing heavily, cramming sweet orange-quarters into dry mouths. Sammy allowed Mr Bennett a few agitated words of encouragement; then he spoke himself in a low, unexcited voice.

—You're holding them well, you forwards. That's the main thing. All we want now is a bit of ball out to the backs. Then we'll be right.

Now it was the second half, beginning well: the swollen crowd jamming the stand and thronging the sidelines silent and tense as the high-punted ball fell into the arms of the Ohemai fullback: he fumbled, and was suddenly lost in a rush of blue players. Rolling loose, the ball was scooped up by Fred Saunders and passed to Ian, who ducked through slim opposition to draw his man and pass to Sammy. Tucking the ball firmly under his arm, Sammy made a quick swerve between two stray forwards and touched down for a try over the Ohemai goal-line: the crowd seething, roaring, subsiding and finally silent now as Sammy attempted the kick for conversion from a difficult angle: the ball edged just outside the posts, failing but leaving scores equalized. As the players hurried back to halfway the crowd relaxed, falling back into seats, lighting cigarettes, making hasty predictions: the ball was kicked off again and lost in a new scramble of forwards: for nearly a halfhour more tight play, more fumbled chances: then, suddenly, a misdirected Ohemai kick bouncing high in centre-field, the excited grey-blue surge of crowd.

Sammy rose high into the air, taking the ball cleanly. His feet seemed to begin churning before he hit the ground and sprang forward: he swerved and fended through an onrush of black players. A desperate tackle: he jumped.

Ian's view was obscured for a moment and then he saw that Sammy was safe, on his own now with only the fullback in the way of the Ohemai line: Sammy drew him, as though about to pass out the ball—but there was none of his team near to receive a pass: his brown legs jerked and slewed deceptively to right and left. Confused, bracing for the tackle, the fullback retreated almost onto his own line: then the tackle came low and swift. Sammy veered up into the air. A hand caught his ankle and he was jerked violently downward, his head buckling under the heavy fall of his body, the ball hugged beneath him and grounded for a try just over the Ohemai line: the players hearing now, for the first time, the crash of the crowd's roar, a sudden furious wave of sound that broke and ebbed slowly away.

Slowing to a walk, they began to gather round Sammy. He was still sprawled over the ball.

—Sammy, Ian said, taking him by the shoulder.

There was no movement.

—Sammy.

The crowd hushed, the players silently gathering.

—Sammy.

The St John's man racing out, the doctor.

—Sammy.

The muscles limp and yielding beneath his hand: he looked up, slowly, into Cedric's wide and stricken eyes.

Rested on the stretcher, his eyes closed, the soiled blue of his shoulders just showing above the dark blanket, Sammy was lifted into the rear of the ambulance. The doctor climbed in and the doors were closed: there was a smooth low whine of engine and tyres turned slowly over grass: the ambulance moved away, through the gate, and was lost to view.

Confused murmurings rose about him. He turned, awkwardly, only to meet the same stricken eyes. He looked away, and Cedric's face was replaced by a group of other faces, circling round him, speaking, the Ohemai captain, coaches, the referee.

—Only another five minutes. Feel like going on with it?

Thick lips jerking in a pale mask: Mr Bennett.

—Sammy'd like it to a finish.

He felt his head swing heavily on a loose neck: a movement

that could have meant agreement.

—All right, said the referee. We'll let it go then.

Cheeks ballooned: the whistle jumped and split the silence.

—You better take the kick, Ian, Mr Bennett said.

—Kick?

—You got to take the kick. See if you can convert Sammy's try.

Mr Bennett vanished suddenly. The players cleared, and the ball was pushed into his hands. Bewildered, he stared down at it. Then he remembered, and called.

—Cedric.

The eyes.

—You place the ball.

Cedric lay flat, the ball held at his fingertips just clear of the broken turf. He signalled: Cedric slanted it into place. He saw the earth slide away beneath his running feet and the ball rise steeply from the toe of his boot: it fell hopelessly wide of the posts.

Back over the halfway, turning to meet the Ohemai kickoff, a hand fastened on his shoulder: Fred Saunders.

—Five minutes. If we can only hold them.

*Hold them*: the ball spun briefly in the air, was hidden: a long ruck, a heavy rush of Ohemai forwards: he falling on the ball, the explosion of a boot into his face: the spinning night, the blood in his mouth: Fred helping him rise: *You all right? Only another four minutes. We only got to hold them now*: the swaying world, the pale anxious blobs against the grey: *You all right? You all right now?* the hollow roar of silence: *I'm all right I'm all right*: a misted face in sharpening focus, the eyes, Cedric: *You better go off you better go*: the blind lurch away, the see-sawing world again: *What the hell we waiting for*: the hysterical whistle, the new and urgent crash of bodies, the boiling tide of blue and black: *hold them*: the whirl and suck of darkness—

—Never thought we'd make it, Fred was saying. Too bloody close for my liking. Feeling better now?

He sagged from their shoulders as they carried him from the field. He opened his eyes to see the blurring shapes of curious spectators advancing: he closed them again to meet the stinging downsurge of darkness. Shaking his head suddenly, he broke free of their arms, his leaden legs lumbering into an unsteady run while their appealing voices rose behind him. As he struggled into the car, Cedric caught his shoulder.

—We better get dressed first.

He fell back in the seat, his eyes closing. Fred's voice spiralled away, receding.

—He should be in hospital too. And look at that lip and nose.

They helped him from the car. He opened his eyes. A face danced past, speaking: Margaret. He could not hear what she said.

At the door of the dressing shed he shook free of their grip again and stumbled through a seething of undressed players to the tin-walled shower room at the back. He put his head under a tap: the sharp rush of cold water soaked through his hair, tingled his scalp and trickled down his face: mingling with sweat and grime and blood, it scalded his broken lip. He wiped the ooze away with a handkerchief. He made no attempt at a full change: moving quickly he pulled trousers over his shorts and tugged a sports coat over his jersey. Cedric hurried to do the same. Then they were out the door, down the ramp, running across the grass, scrambling into the car. He shovelled back a handful of hair which dripped over his eyes. The engine stuttered, the gears grated: the car jumped forward. He wrenched the wheel and, gathering speed, they shot out the gate.

## 4

The clock in the waiting room showed halfpast nine. Somewhere deep within the building an unseen door clicked open and softly closed: they heard the doctor advancing towards them again, the whisper and squeak of his shoes over the high polish of the hospital linoleum.

The same people waited for him as before. There were the two footballers, not fully dressed yet, with sports coats buttoned over muddied-blue jerseys: one wild-eyed with plastered lip and dried blood caking jersey-front and coat-lapels; the other hunched forward, elbows on knees, his half-washed face drawn and pale beneath the stain of dirt, his mouth trembling nervously, his eyes lowered. There was the coach with a lumpy solemn face which still retained a trace of bewilderment, who every few minutes fumbled a tobacco-tin from a pocket to roll another thin and quickly-smoked cigarette. Then there were the two old people: the old man with a tired passionless face and a gaunt body who was having difficulty in finding something to do with the large fidgeting hands that curled and uncurled around the curved head of the walking-stick which rested between his knees; the woman still weeping quietly, as she had been since they led her here, into

the harsh light, from the long antiseptic corridor, her huge body shaking at each new suppressed sob. Comforting her were the three of the other maori family: the two old people; their daughter, the pretty young girl in the flowered-print dance frock who sat stiff and motionless, her hands folded in her lap, her head erect, her brown face expressionless, her eyes downcast.

The footsteps sounded nearer. He rose to his feet, his legs stiffly taking the weight of his body. Then the doctor moved into view round a corner and came towards them, white-gowned, a surgical mask limp around his neck, his thin bloodless lips opening to speak as he pushed through the swinging glass doors into the room.

—I'm sorry . . . .

He moved quickly past the doctor, bursting into the corridor, his legs jerking into a run. The walls slid past and the black entrance yawned open to receive him into the chill night, where lifeless stars prickled a cold sky. As the stale springs of the front-seat jangled awake beneath the sudden slump of his body and he groped for the ignition key, he heard Cedric's hurried footsteps, following.

Set a little up from the street, built into a slope, the hall was silent, suspended in a bright halo of light. At the fringe of the brightness gleamed tight lines of parked cars. A drooping banner, almost in shadow now, bore a rainstreaked red legend: END OF SEASON DANCE HERE SATURDAY.

Squealing brakes choked the Ford. They scrambled out, the doors crashing shut behind them as they raced up the flight of steps to the hall. The entrance was jammed with silent people, facing inwards until they heard the quick, heavy fall of feet behind. Then, turning, they saw the pair, urgent-faced, dishevelled; they melted apart, allowing them through.

Inside, at the far end of the hall, the presentations had begun. The darksuited local rugby union president, frowning, his speech now halted in mid-sentence, stood beside a flimsy cardtable which sagged beneath the weight of silver trophies: he watched the pair advance across the floor; the crowd followed, closing in.

—Sammy, Ian began.

But he couldn't say the rest: his head fell downwards, shaking, while his lungs choked air and the heart-thump paralysed his chest.

—No—not . . . he's not . . . .

But there was no need for question or answer. There was a small silence, then something like a faint released sigh: the crowd seemed to back away, instinctively, before surging forward again.

There was a rising confusion of voices: then the president found new words and resumed his speech.

—We all knew Sammy Kahu . . . .

The orchestra folded their unwanted music-stands, cased the instruments which should already have spun an intricate turning pattern of dappled dancers and mingled laughter. But now there was only movement away, the hall emptying quickly, the coloured streamers twisted above the deserted floor.

Outside, at the foot of the steps, they halted: Cedric, Ian, and a close group of the team, unwilling now to leave each other. Ian spoke with deliberate casualness.

—Anyone got any beer? I feel like some.

—There's a bit round the back.

They gathered there in a tight circle, the broken light from the hall-windows playing lightly over their faces as they watched the beer froth and spill from the wide silver bowl of the cup. He lifted it suddenly to his mouth, tilting back his head as he drank greedily, driblets falling down his chin. Then, wiping his mouth, he pushed the cup into Cedric's yielding hands.

—Go on.

Cedric sipped.

—Go on. Drink it.

Cedric choked, coughed.

—Give it here.

He wrenched the cup brutally free of Cedric's grasp and flung it away: it smashed hard against the side of the hall, fell softly into long grass. Cedric uttered a faint sound and stumbled after it. Ian turned his back on the group, walking quickly away.

As he came round the front of the hall a figure moved out of shadow to meet him. A hand reached out and touched gently on his arm. He saw Margaret's face, white and strained. He twisted free of her.

—Leave me.

The words rushed out in a thin, choked cry of despair. The hall lights were extinguished suddenly and her pleading face was swallowed into darkness: vanishing just as he turned from her and raced away into the deepened night, hearing, as though from a long way off, the beat on asphalt of his own running feet.

## 5

The morning of the last day of the tangi he rose early. The dawn was grey, but the sky was already fragmented with soft gleams of growing light. He met Cedric and they rode in silence to the outskirts of the town. The maori meeting house was built above the road, clefted into a hillside. The Ford rolled into a line of night-long parked cars, vans, motor-cycles and trucks, all damp with dew and glistening in the raw light. Some tethered horses whinnied and jerked away.

They left the car, walked beneath the carved gateway, and climbed a slope of lawn. Mr Kahu waited for them on the porch. Blinking his red eyes, he nodded as they approached: then, without speaking, bent over the slow scraping of his walking-stick, he guided them through the low entrance and into the dark interior of the building.

The stale air inside was tepid, smoky and human-smelling. As their eyes grew accustomed to the light they saw the blanketed mounds of sleepers crowded over the floor, the relatives and friends who had travelled for the tangi. There was a low murmur of awakened voices. A young man, propped up against the wall, coughed as he smoked his first cigarette of the day. With breast bared, a mother suckled a new baby. They stepped over an old man who slept across their path. Somewhere a child cried, was silenced. Then a new sound, a rising several-voiced moaning: the mourners whom they could see now as they approached the shadowy knot of people at the far end of the building: the old wrinkled women with sunken mouths and tattooed chins who sat and knelt around the body, their cheeks beginning to dampen with renewed weeping while their worn and lumpy fingers splayed over the sides of the open coffin.

Their ears filling with the rise and fall of hoarsened voices, they halted, their eyes resting briefly on the semi-circle of ageless weathered faces ovalled within black head-scarves, before falling slowly downwards: the jersey was a bright blue among the crisp white folds of the shroud; the face was brown and frozen, unsmiling.

Behind them, Mr Kahu shuffled away, his stick tick-tacking over the wooden floor. There were continued movements of awakening: new voices, still lowered.

While the old women moved aside for him, Cedric knelt beside the coffin. He stared momentarily into their faces, as though for approval, and then slowly reached out a hand, his fingers gently

seeking and enclosing the cold curve of Sammy's cheek.

A single mourner's voice rose, high and lonely.

Ian could stand it no longer: he looked away.

Three hours later—seeing, beyond the white-robed minister, the closed coffin set on a trestle in the tidied meeting house while the words of the service passed over him in a low monotone—he remembered his talk with the editor.

—You mean to tell me you can't write it? An obituary for someone you knew—your best friend wasn't he?

—It's just that . . . .

—Just that what?

—Just that I'd rather someone else wrote it.

—Someone else? Who else? You knew him, didn't you?

—I tried to write it but I can't. I can't explain. I'm sorry.

—In this work, my boy, there's no such word as can't. You ought to know that by now. Go back and try again. Try and forget you ever knew him. Make it objective. Just see how objective you can be. It'll be good training for you. And don't come back here and tell me you can't. Of course you can.

He backed away. Polishing his glasses, the editor coughed and added:

—I've never heard of anything like it. A person who doesn't want to write an obituary for his best friend. Most people'd jump at the chance.

He waved Ian away.

—Go on. Go back and write it. You'll be all right.

Returning to his office, the first thing to catch his eye as he sat at the desk was a shuffled heap of copy-paper, half-hidden beneath a book. It was the story Sammy had found him writing. He stared at it, as though seeing it for the first time. Then he reached forward and swept it off the desk: pages fluttered to the floor and lay still. He jammed a fresh sheet of paper into the typewriter and his fingers began to chop down on the keys, quickly and jerkily. Soon he had written the obituary: objectively, in the same way as he might have written a hundred other stories, stringing the meagre facts of a brief existence together in glib, lifeless sentences. It was done, finished without even revision, and he took the gathered pages between finger and thumb and carried them from the room and let them fall, loosely, into the copy-basket on the sub-editor's desk.

Then it had been easy, after all. What else could he expect?

Of course it was easy, that way. Everything could be easy, even living.

The editor had asked him to get a photograph. He went first to Mr and Mrs Kahu, but they had nothing recent suitable. So he went to his home and removed from the frame on his bedroom desk a photograph taken two summers before, a candid of Sammy, Cedric and himself at a carnival. A photo-block could be made of part of the picture, Sammy's head and shoulders, leaving out Cedric and himself. Cool in open-neck sports shirts, they stood close together under the stinging sun. In the centre Sammy showed his broad white smile to the camera, hands in pockets, his body relaxed in a confident feet-apart stance. With a faint grin, Cedric stood stiffly, his hands clenched nervously at his sides. His own face was almost severe as he squinted against the hard light. In the background the many-coloured flow of the summer crowd was frozen to a grey blurred-focus stillness, so that the three foreground figures were stamped sharply against it. He remembered that the photograph had been taken only a little while after Cedric had recovered from his long illness. Through spring and summer, while Cedric remained in bed, he should have had Sammy more to himself. But it hadn't turned out that way: night after night he drove out to the Kahu farm to bring Sammy into town to Cedric's home; week after week there were the long hours by the sickbed while Cedric's thin face smiled weakly and Sammy talked softly, reassuringly. And, later, there were the lingering weeks of recuperation: the frail shape blanketed on a chair in the warm slant of the morning sunshine: the new smile, the first slow walks: the gentle swing of the checkered dressing gown as the pyjamaed legs faltered painfully, and then moved forward again while Sammy's bare brown arm curled even more strongly around the invalid's back: the husk and rustle of leaves underfoot, the low afternoon sun casting traceries of shadow across them as they slowly followed the winding of the riverbank path, Cedric stronger between them.

Yet once there had been only two of them: a weekend in spring when they went out towards the coast on a shooting trip: only two days, but Sammy, anxious whether Cedric would be lonely, had soon become stricken with guilt at deserting the sickbed. As they walked through the bush, their rifles dangling, the sun striking yellowly through the trees, birds and cicadas dinning about them, he tried to make Sammy forget the dim bedroom with its oppressive smell of sickness and see the countryside in its rich awakening. But Sammy's face would be set firmly in its anxiety and guilt. So then, speaking impulsively and rapidly—after confiding ambitions

about the newspaper work which was then still new to him—he encouraged Sammy to talk about the farm. And once in that weekend he was successful, and Cedric seemed forgotten: remembering now the two of them sprawled outside their tiny tent in the grassy clearing walled by bush and roofed by stars: the first light of the new moon silvering the high ridges above them, the untroubled sounds of a calm night, the murmur of insects, the far cry of a morepork: the two of them resting close together, their faces lit yellow-red as they stared into the fading flicker of the campfire, their quiet voices lifting into the darkness.

New to the district, the young maori minister was nervous and unsure of himself before the large congregation which crowded the meeting house, spilled thickly over the porch and finally thinned out across the lawn. He held a small prayer-book between upturned palms. He read first in maori, then translated.

*—We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*

His voice was low and uneven: despite his nervousness the words seemed to measure themselves carefully for effect. Another prayer, then silence: there remained the varnished coffin on the wooden trestle, now lifted high by Sammy's brothers and uncles: now the long shuffling movement down the aisle behind pallbearers and relatives, the sudden release from shadow to sunlight, the careful mounting of the coffin in the black hearse, the renewed wailing of the mourners, and, finally, awareness again of Cedric beside him, and of the aching strangeness between them.

The six of them, the five team members and the coach, moved slowly, arm around arm, shouldering their burden down the long-grass pathway, between the leaning tombstones and the broken crosses and the grey angels. Around them, clashing fern fronds and greenery, the old women raised their tired voices in a final grieving fury. At the graveside, following the quiet instructions of the old maori gravedigger, they edged the coffin onto the two pieces of rough timber which spanned the shadowed depth of yellow clay. Mr Bennett seemed to crumple suddenly, falling brokenly on his knees: Fred Saunders helped him away. Then the young minister began to read again.

*—Man that is born of woman*

Mrs Kahu was led gently towards the gate, the sound of her weeping coming back to them in a low constant murmur.

—*He cometh up, and is cut down like a flower*

There was a choking sound beside him: a sudden released sob. He slipped an arm around the quivering sway of Cedric's body. Then still another sound, a feverish rising moan: a slim figure moved swiftly through the parting crowd, flinging itself forward towards the descending coffin, only to be caught and held at the last moment. Weri collapsed back into the arms of the old women.

The sun was hot in an empty sky; far below, on the wide valley floor, light gleamed along the river as it threaded between the huddled shimmer of the town's rooftops. Turning at last from the graveside, the crowd moved slowly, in groups and vague clusters, toward the gate; exhausts jetted, cars began to roll away.

He stood with a group of the team near the gate: the gentle hand on his sleeve took him away from them almost before he realized who was leading him. Margaret's voice was soft and lowered, urgent.

—I wanted to tell you the other night, she said. I wanted to . . .

Her voice faded; she bit her lip, hesitating.

—It doesn't matter, he said.

—It does matter. It matters to me.

—What?

—That . . . it's just that I want you to know that I understand how you feel—about everything. I wish I could say it better but I can't. I'm sorry.

—Thanks

He couldn't say any more: he couldn't meet her troubled eyes in a face strange without its smile. The silence hovered between them. Around them the slow movement away continued: the handshakes, the goodbyes, the cars rolling.

—It was terrible about Weri, she said at last.

—Yes, I knew about it.

—You knew?

—Of course. Anyone with eyes to see knew how it was with her. I used to think about mentioning it to Sammy, just to see if he knew how she felt. I wish I had—but what does it matter now? I knew, all right.

Silence again: far beyond her face he saw a hawk rising, a tiny speck growing into the sky, soaring darkly, then falling.

—Then you didn't know, she said.

—Didn't know what?

She wasn't looking at him now; she made a half-turn away.

—It doesn't matter, she said.

—What d'you mean?

She moved away.

—No. Not now. Later. You'll find out soon enough.

He followed, restraining a sudden impulse to take her by the shoulders and shake an answer from her.

—What? For God's sake . . . .

She halted suddenly, and their eyes met. And while other voices rose soft and confused about them, she told him.

—It was more than you knew. You didn't ever really know anything. You see, Weri's pregnant. Yes, Sammy. And before Saturday they'd made plans, arrangements—to get married. Quite soon. It was all done quietly. But it wasn't just a sudden thing. It'd been going on for a while, only you never saw it because Sammy—because he . . . .

She twisted her face away.

—Because he—because I don't think he wanted Cedric or you to know about it, not right away.

## 6

Quite suddenly, the first bitterness gone from him now, he seemed to see himself as an outsider, a stranger because of things unseen and unknown, a blind man awakened from darkness to the true colour and contour of a new and unfamiliar world. He closed his eyes momentarily, but a jerk of the wheel opened them again. The road slid endlessly beneath his vision. A foolish sweat moistened his palms, leaving damp traces on the dark corrugations of the wheel. Blindness, he thought, his lips silently forming the word: blind to their devotion, their real meaning, he had never until now seen the two important people, known them as the important ones, the lovers: who had been content, unselfish, asking for nothing more. Pictures formed in his mind: the weak smile on Cedric's pale face as Sammy helped him walk through a summer garden, the bare brown arm curled strong around the checkered pattern of the dressing gown; Weri seated solitary at the side of the dance hall, beyond the music and the laughter, her eyes resting on Sammy, her face placid, unimpatient; Cedric kneeling beside the coffin, his gentle fingers slowly finding the frozen curve of Sammy's face; Weri darting swiftly through the surprised parting of the graveside crowd, falling forward. These built and faded against that other picture, the shadowy twilit one of the farm and the two old people. Yet there remained still another, one

which he could not bring to full focus, not yet. The one in which he might seek himself. Perhaps it would come with time, and then only slowly. And as a friend: a friend. Wasn't that enough? What more could you ask?

Now, Cedric silent beside him, the afternoon sun bright on the windscreen and the cool air rushing against his face, he drove along the white road which wound dustily out from the town towards the coast.

Leaving the cemetery, he had first of all driven Margaret home. On the way there was nothing more said between them: there had seemed nothing more left to say. And Cedric had been in the back of the car, Cedric who did not know. When he halted the car at the Saunders's gate and Margaret flipped open the door and stepped lightly out onto the roadside, he spoke first.

—I suppose I'll be seeing you round.

—Yes, she said. But not for very long.

—Not for very long?

—No. I was saving it up to tell you on Saturday night when I saw you at the dance. They've decided I can go to the city, after all. I'm going to live with an aunt. Don't know what I'll work at yet, but I'll find something, don't worry. So you see I won't be round much longer.

—How much longer?

—A week or two anyway. I'm not sure yet. We'll probably be having an evening at our place before I go. Just something quiet. You and Cedric must come.

—Thanks. I'd like to.

—Yes, Cedric echoed from the back. I'd like to too. We'll be sorry to see you go.

—Can't say I'll be sorry. I been wanting to go long enough. But I suppose you're always a little bit sorry when you leave any place. Especially home.

—I suppose so, Cedric said.

—I was wondering, Ian began.

—Yes? She inclined her head towards him.

—I was wondering if you couldn't—I mean if I couldn't come out and see you one day before you leave. We might go for a drive, or something. What do you think?

—I'd love that, she said.

It was only afterwards, when he remembered the strangeness of it, that he realized that the whole conversation had been conducted without a smile or even the trace of a smile: that they

had spoken in low flat voices, unvarying in pitch, like raw actors bewildered by the stage on which they had suddenly found themselves.

And then, driving back into town, Cedric and he decided to have lunch together; they had it in a milkbar, sandwiches and coffee. After they had finished, still sitting in the cramped cubicle, the silence growing heavier between them, he suddenly feared the return to the office, to normality; lighting a cigarette, he said:

—I'm not going back to work this afternoon. What about you?

—I better go back to the shop.

But it had not been hard to dissuade him; to change his mind by suggesting a drive somewhere, it didn't matter where. For he sensed in Cedric not the same fear as his own, but a hunger, an urgent need for someone to share new loneliness.

Still travelling fast, the car bucked over ruts and potholes. Ahead the road narrowed to a thin white thread, then began to rise, clefting between limestone bluffs and sheer slopes, trickles of bush and sunwhitening forests of burnt-dead trees, between erosion-sagged earth and bleak hill-pasture. The afternoon sun, now retreating before them, lit long orange streaks along the ridge-tops. Occasional straggles of sheep stirred at the sound of the motor.

—Where we going? Cedric said.

—Anywhere. You particular?

—Not really. I never been along this road before. It goes to the coast, doesn't it?

—That's right.

—Have you ever been along here before?

—Once.

The car began a long, slow climb; the engine faltered at the gear-change, then recovered.

—When did you come here before? Cedric asked finally.

—A year or two ago. That time when Sammy and I went on that shooting trip. When you were sick, remember?

Slowing now, the car ground desperately up the last of the climb. Then he turned it onto the grassy strip at the side of the road and cut the engine.

—How about a walk? he said. I've done enough driving for one day. We should be able to get a decent view from somewhere up here. We're quite close to the sea now. What d'you say?

Cedric said nothing, watching while he leaned over into the back-seat and drew out a small half-filled bottle from under some

old clothing; he slipped it into his hip-pocket, avoiding Cedric's eyes.

—Do we have to have that? Cedric said quietly.

—It might help.

Entwined manuka, punga and blackberry banked onto the road. They fought a path through it, scrambling upwards and finally climbing through a slack barbedwire fence and emerging onto open ground, scantily grassed and strewn with decayed sheep droppings.

They followed the line of a climbing ridge: the ragged patchwork of the countryside spread itself behind them: the weak limestone-outcropped pasture, the strung-out second-growth, the tall green bush which lingered in hollows and folds. To the west the land fell away suddenly, then gently, gathering bush and smoothing itself downward to finger into distant rocky headlands, surf-traced. In a tinted boil of cloud, the low sun hovered there, sparking the sea to a dazzling blue.

Their walk ended where the ridge lifted to a high point. They sat, resting back against a thick weatherworn spear of limestone.

—That time you went shooting with Sammy—is this where you came?

—Somewhere round here.

—Where?

—Can't remember exactly. We camped somewhere down there.

But he could remember. Pointing, he carelessly indicated the downfolding outline of the valley which lay directly below them. But he could have pointed to almost the exact place, in miniature, where the bush spilled into the bend of the creek: even from here he could have almost identified that hidden clearing where they pitched their tent and built their campfire. But this wasn't how he'd wanted to see it again. Then why had he come? He didn't even know that, except that the road had been there and the choice instinctive. What would he find if he approached closer? Nothing: shadows lengthening across an empty clearing, a rustle of wind, perhaps a surviving tent-peg, the flattened grass erect again, the scorched grass renewed and green and overgrowing a few charred pieces of wood, the blackened topsoil long ago washed clean by rain. And now, staring downward, the scene which he had wanted to build carefully in his mind again was blurring beyond recall: then, quite suddenly, it was gone altogether. But he did not care now, because it would build again, with time, and then and only then, not coloured by false imaginings, it would be a true picture.

He lifted his eyes. It seemed that time had passed quickly, for the descending sun had already begun to scorch the surface of the sea.

—I suppose we'd better be going home, Cedric said. It's getting late.

He made no move to rise. Instead, he felt into his hip-pocket, drew out the bottle, and, uncorking it, offered it to Cedric.

—No thanks.

—Come on. Just one nip. It'll make you feel better.

Cedric accepted the bottle uneasily and drank: he coughed, spat, and quickly handed it back.

—That'll do me, thanks.

He drank, settled the bottle between his feet, and rolled a cigarette.

—What're you going to do now? he said, striking a match and watching the pale blue-yellow flame coil down the thin stick.

—Do? Cedric said.

—With yourself.

—Nothing different. Why should I do any different?

Ian shrugged as he lit the cigarette. He let the blue smoke curl slowly from the corners of his mouth. The sun was beginning to die now; shadow gathered softly through the valleys. The wind had dropped, and there was a growing coolness in the air.

—I don't know, he said.

—Are you going to do any different?

—Nothing more than I've intended.

Cedric plucked a stray twig from the grass. He snapped it between his fingers, making a sudden sharp report in the silence.

—Sammy thought you would.

—Would what?

—Go off to the city pretty soon. Like you talked about, getting a job on a big city paper and going to university and everything.

—Did he? Well, he wasn't quite right. I won't be getting a job on a paper.

—Why not?

—I've been thinking lately it's not my kind of thing, that's all. I'll find something else to work at while I'm going to university.

—What d'you want to go rushing off for anyway? You're all right here, aren't you?

—It's time I got out. I haven't been hitting it off too well at home lately.

—What's wrong? Don't you like your people?

Ian hesitated.

—Of course I like them. They've done a lot for me, and I'm grateful. But we just happen to see things differently, that's all. And, besides, there's other things I don't like here.

—Like what?

—Like being all right.

He felt Cedric's puzzled eyes rest on him for a second, then turn away.

—I suppose you'll be seeing Margaret in the city, Cedric said.

—I might.

—Sammy told me once he wouldn't be too surprised if you two got engaged one of these days. He said you suited each other, you two.

—When did he tell you that?

—Just once when we were talking. He said it was funny to see how you dodged her, like you were scared of her.

Ian drank again, and set the bottle down. He drew deeply on the short butt of his cigarette, trying to calm the trembling of his hand.

—What else did Sammy used to tell you? he said.

—Lots of things . . . . Hadn't we better be going home now?

—In a moment.

The sun had slipped below the sea, leaving a faint fire to linger beneath a pastel sky.

—The team'll be funny without Sammy next year, he said.

—Without you too.

—They might make you captain.

—Not me, Cedric said.

—Why not?

—I won't be playing any more. I've had enough.

There was a long silence. The dusk was gathering quickly now; soon the wind would rise, and stars prick through a darkening sky.

—I keep thinking about him, Cedric said. Do you think he felt anything?

—I doubt it. It was all over pretty quickly.

He drank once more, finally, and emptied the dregs from the bottle. Then he rose to his feet with a curious feeling of lightness.

—Yes, he said. It was all over pretty quickly. It's the best way to go.

He looked down at Cedric, still sitting on the grass: there was no indication he had even heard.

—Yes, he repeated, as though to convince himself now.

He took the bottle firmly by the neck.

—Blessed be the name of the Lord, he said finally, bitterly.

He threw the bottle away. It lifted high into the calm dusk air and seemed to hang still for a moment before it began to spin down, around and around, faster and faster, sucked quickly and soundlessly into the fading light so that he could not see its final meeting with earth: so that they only heard the faintest of distant sounds as it smashed and splintered on the stony valley floor, far below.

CHARLES DOYLE

## *Sunday Morning*

We waken for the thirteenth Sunday morning
Of anno nineteen hundred and fifty six
In the Antipodes (one before Easter Sunday).
From thoughts' unmapped antipodes returning
Homeward to the familiar, the more mundane
And minor isthmus of our daily living;
From deep night; from the wind's and minds' antics.

We can expect the usual mutations,
Season for season; knowing that the frail
White flowers of lacebark crushed in heavy rain
Merely continue cycles; the grey formations
Of cloud invading our valley follow the vane
Symbolic on its steeple; bird migrations
Continue despite our will, if willed at all.

Comfort is ours in every minute feature
Of known routines; the smallness of our grief
Forgotten altogether as we plan
The waking day according to our nature.
We are forgetful, it is as well forgotten,
Of how many mornings we'll waken in the future
Glad to be living, pitying all who live.

ALLEN CURNOW

# *The Eye is More or Less Satisfied with Seeing*

Wholehearted he can't move
From where he is, nor love

Wholehearted that place,
Indigene janus-face,

Half mocking half,
Neither caring to laugh.

Does true or false sun rise?
Do both half eyes tell lies?

Cradle or grave, which view's
The actual of the two?

Half eyes foretell, forget
Sunrise, sunset,

Or closed a fraction's while
Half eyes half smile

Upon light the spider lid
Snares, holds hid

And holds him whole (between
The split scarves of that scene)

Brimming astride a pulse
Of moon-described eyeball's

Immobile plenitude —
Flower of the slight stemmed flood.

Snap open! He's all eyes, wary,
Darting both ways one query,

Whether the moonbeam glanced
Upon half to whole enhanced,

Or wholly the soul's error
And confederate mirror.

J. Y. T. GREIG

# *Tolstoi on Art*

Tolstoi wrote *What is Art?* a good many years after his conversion. It implies the condemnation of nearly all his own fiction written earlier in the nineteenth century, including *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina;* and, at the same time, of nearly all those other works of European art, whether literary, pictorial, or musical, that we are accustomed to look upon as masterpieces. Indeed, Tolstoi goes farther than merely implying this: he dismisses as 'rude, savage, and, for us, often meaningless' the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes among the Ancients, and, among later European poets, painters, and musicians, the works of Dante, Tasso, Shakespeare, Milton, Raphael, Michael Angelo, Bach, Beethoven, Ibsen, Verlaine, Wagner, and others less famous; and he repudiates as 'bad art' all his own writings before 1898 except 'God sees the Truth' and 'The Prisoner of the Caucasus'. A theory so revolutionary that it compels this rejection of acknowledged classics is not necessarily unsound. Mankind may have been wrong for centuries. Mankind often is. But the principle of economy in science is methodologically sound: if a new hypothesis requires the discarding of a great many other hypotheses or principles firmly established, it is wise to receive the new hypothesis with extreme scepticism.

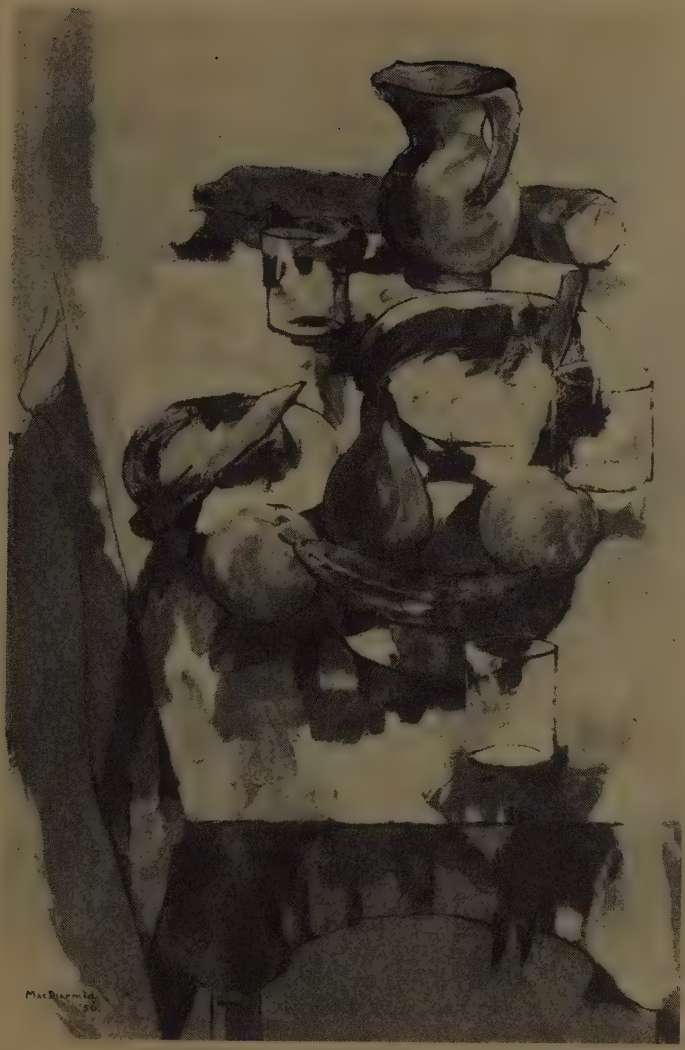
But *hypothesis*, with its scientific connotations, is scarcely an appropriate word to make use of in relation to Tolstoi's theory of art; for although he talked of science now and then, using the word glibly when it suited him, his approach and his method were by no means scientific. Not for him the slow processes of induction. The whole of his theory is deduced from one fundamental dogma —the brotherhood of man. This—begging the question with a superb air of infallibility and rectitude—he calls 'true' or 'real' Christianity, or 'the religious perception of our time', and sharply contrasts both with the spurious Christianity of the established churches in Europe, Orthodox, Catholic, or Protestant, and with the absence of all religious perception in the upper classes. From his fundamental dogma he deduces a second, which is ethical, a judgment of value: since all men are brothers under the fatherhood of God, whatever serves to unite them is 'good', and whatever serves to divide them, 'bad'. If, therefore, men are united either by

their sense of sonship to God or by their common possession of simple feelings, only that kind of art which expresses this sense or these common feelings is to be looked upon as 'good'.

This is the theory in outline. It remains to see how he works it out.

He begins by examining writers on aesthetics, from Baumgarten down. Aesthetics is, by definition, the science of beauty. But, Tolstoi argues, theories of art that we build on the supposed relation between art and beauty get nowhere. Asked what we mean by beauty, we have only two alternatives. The first is to turn mystical and Platonic. We then find that the concept of beauty merges with that of the highest perfection, God; and this, says Tolstoi, leads to 'a fantastic definition, founded on nothing'. The second alternative is to remain subjective. We then equate beauty with that which pleases us. In the end, both definitions come to the same thing. Beauty is that which pleases us without evoking desire; and 'there is and can be no explanation of why one thing pleases one man and displeases another, or vice versa'. Consequently aesthetics fails to do what we have a right to expect of a science: 'It does not define the qualities and laws of art, or of the beautiful (if that be the content of art), or of the nature of taste (if taste decides the question of art and its merit), and then, on the basis of such definitions, acknowledge as art those productions which correspond to these laws, and reject those which do not come under them.'

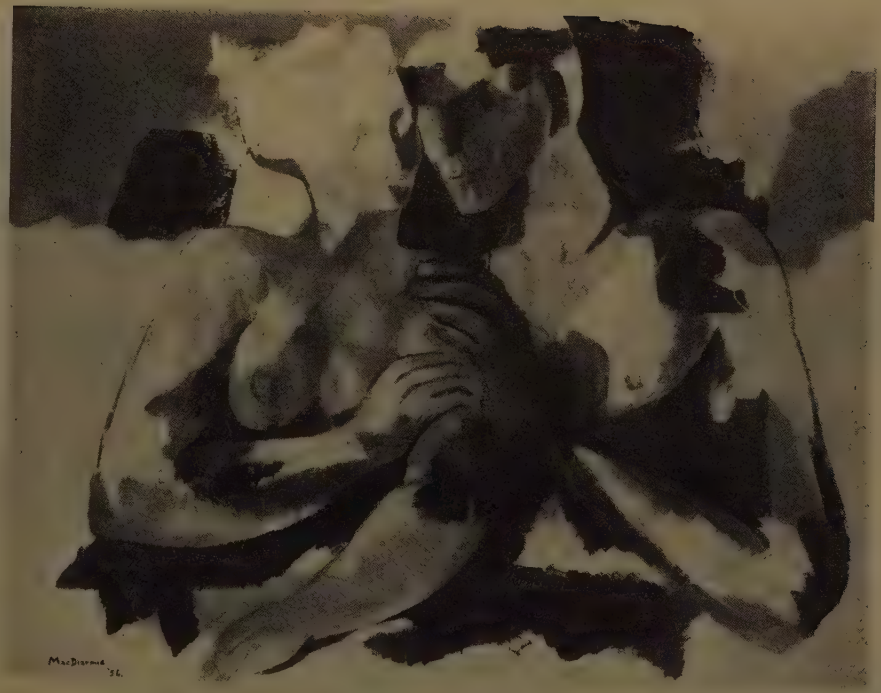
So far, I would say, Tolstoi is on pretty firm ground. Philosophical aesthetics of the kind he has been examining has generally proved barren. Not merely is the concept of beauty extremely elusive; it also extends far beyond the range of what we are agreed to call art. Men apply the term beauty to natural objects—landscapes, animals, persons, for example—which are not the products of any art; they also apply it to human actions—'a pretty gesture', 'a beautiful deed of heroism'—which have nothing to do with art either. It may, of course, be possible to define beauty in such a way that all beautiful things, natural and artificial, all beautiful deeds, all beautiful characters, all beautiful thoughts, etc., etc., will be brought within the scope of the definition; but only by making the definition so general and vague that the result is not worth the labour. In any event we shall then not be any nearer finding the criterion of *art*. The same is true if we substitute *pleasure* for *beauty*. It may well be true to say that art gives pleasure. But then so does swimming, and lying on the beach in a warm sun afterwards, and deciphering hieroglyphics, and making




36 in. x 24 in.

Still Life. *Oil.* 1956.

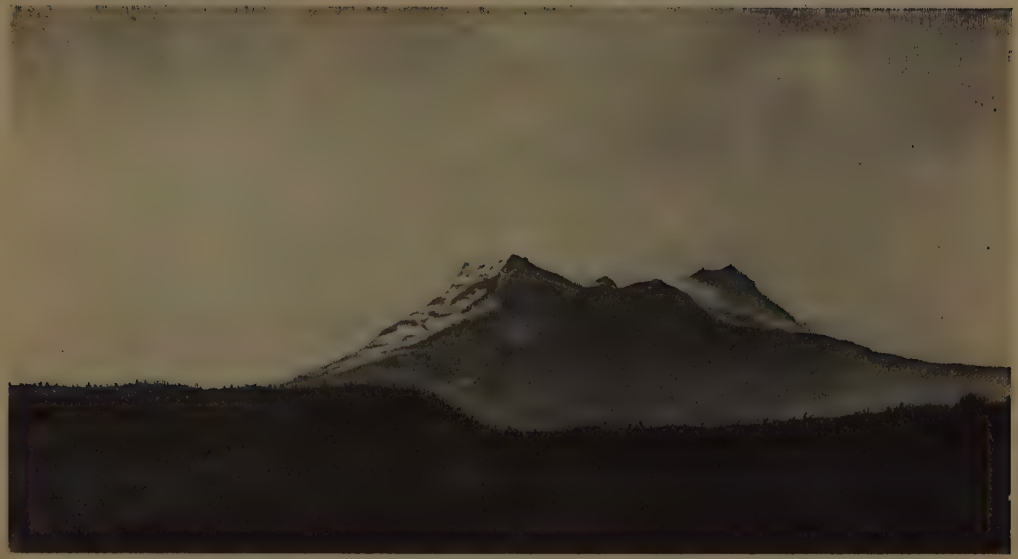
PAINTINGS BY DOUGLAS MACDIARMID




Lovers. *Oil.* 1956. 20 in. x 26 in.

13 in. x 16 in.

Haymaking. *Oil.* 1955.



7½ in. x 13¾ in.

Ruapehu. *Oil.* 1945.

love, and drinking a glass of beer when we are thirsty. The giving of pleasure is no more a criterion of art than it is of any other human activity, trivial or significant. As Tolstoi aptly says (and in saying it he takes us straight back to Aristotle): 'To see the aim and purpose of art in the pleasure we get from it, is like assuming . . . that the purpose and aim of food is the pleasure derived from consuming it.' The key word there is *derived*. Pleasure is derivative, secondary; it is not primary. You cannot achieve pleasure by aiming directly at it; you can achieve it only indirectly, by aiming at something else. It is like the bloom of health on the countenance of the well-trained athlete (to take Aristotle's famous simile). It is the hall-mark stamped upon *any* successful human activity.

Turning from writers on aesthetics, Tolstoi finds the criterion of art in its 'infectiousness'. Art is a means of communication between man and man. Speech, he says (and by this he plainly means language, whether spoken or written) transmits the 'thoughts and experiences' of one man to others. In a similar way, art transmits 'feelings'. Both language and art, therefore, are bonds of union in human life.

In this section of his book Tolstoi is unpardonably loose and careless in his phrasing.[1] By his own admission, language transmits not only 'thoughts' but also 'experiences', yet in the very next sentence he distinguishes art from language by saying that language transmits only thoughts, whereas the former transmits 'feelings'. To make the point that at least one of the arts, literature—the very art in which Tolstoi himself proved to be a master craftsman—has language for its medium, might appear quibbling. It is not. It is a crucial objection to his theory. For the moment, however, let us inquire what precisely Tolstoi means by *feeling*—a word with a multiplicity of well-established meanings. On the whole he seems to mean by *feeling* what in both everyday speech and the language of psychologists is covered by the slightly more precise word *emotion*. When, for example, he speaks of the 'common' feelings that art, in his view, ought to transmit, he mentions merriment, pity, cheerfulness, and tranquillity, but sharply rejects amusement. It is soon obvious that he is not pretending to be a psychologist; he is not impartial when considering those forms of human experience that we call emotions;

[1] How much of the blame should be shared by his translator, Aylmer Maude, I do not know. More than one of my Russian friends in the earlier years of this century expressed themselves very forcibly on the poor English translations of Russian literature.

he is determined to select, as legitimate in art, only those emotions that he happens, for other reasons, to approve of, and reject those (sexual emotion, for example) that he happens to disapprove of. Besides, what meaning are we to give to what he calls 'experiences'? He couples 'experiences' with 'thoughts' as the elements that language, in contrast to art, transmits; but unless we include 'feelings' ('emotions') as ingredients of experiences, the word *experience* makes no sense; and if we do include them, the distinction between language and art breaks down at once, since language is found to transmit feelings as well as thoughts.

The distinction breaks down when viewed from the other side too. Admit that literature is a form of language at work, and at the same time an art, and you find that it communicates far more than feelings, however comprehensive you make your definition of feelings. It is easy enough to take Tolstoi's own terms, and show that the art of literature transmits thoughts *and* feelings. That is enough to knock the bottom out of his theory as he fashioned it. But to say 'thoughts *and* feelings' is inadequate also. We are concerned, not so much with x + y, as with xy—a fusion of x and y. What we are to call this xy is the question. There is a good deal to be said for adopting the term used by Mr I. A. Richards—*attitudes*. An attitude of the mind results from a fusion of thought and emotion. My own preference is for the term *experiencing*, which, vague and general though it is, suggests activity as well as the result of past activity. It is important to emphasize that the reading of a poem, the looking at a picture, the listening to music, are activities, not mere passive reception of the result of someone else's activity.

Moreover, it is, to say the least, doubtful if pure emotion is anything but an abstraction from human experiencing; if, that is to say, it ever occurs in human life. At any rate, it is true that, of all the arts, only music comes near to the transmission of this (hypothetical) pure emotion. Tolstoi was not thinking of music. He was thinking principally of the other arts, and especially of literature. Kindliness, good will, comradeship, etc., which he insisted art should transmit, are not pure emotions; they are emotional attitudes, and therefore complex, not simple; they depend on intellection as well as on affect.

Having raised these objections, I would nevertheless emphasize the importance and novelty of Tolstoi's infection theory. To us now, it may not appear novel. Benedetto Croce restated it, and many others after him; and I think most of us have come to accept the underlying principle as a commonplace, even when we reject

this or that formulation of it. 'To evoke in oneself', says Tolstoi, 'a feeling one has once experienced, and having evoked it in oneself, then, by means of movements, lines, colours, sounds, or forms expressed in words, so to transmit that feeling that others may experience the same feeling—this is the activity of art.' And again, 'Art is a human activity, consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that other people are infected by these feelings, and also experience them.' At the time when Tolstoi wrote these statements, neither was a commonplace.

We should, however, notice the word *consciously* in the second of these formulations of the infection theory. Tolstoi would appear to be saying, first, that we have no art unless the artist deliberately sets out to infect others with his own feelings; and secondly, that he always knows precisely what he is about. If these are the implications of the word *consciously*, we may hesitate before accepting them. It is indisputable that the recipient of art—the reader, spectator, or listener—perceiving the external signs passed on to him by the artist, somehow re-experiences what the artist experienced in the first place. But the word *somehow* needs expansion. It is not necessary to suppose either that the re-experiencing in the recipient is equally intense with the experiencing of the artist, or that it passes through the same stages. What the recipient gets is the final and completed experiencing of the artist, experiencing that has gone on over a longer or shorter period of time, experiencing that is fused, shaped, integral. A work of art is made; and making implies not only shaping but also discarding. The débris of the artist's experiencing, all that he at one time thought of including in the work but afterwards rejected, may be interesting to someone studying the technique of a certain art or the life of the artist in question. It has nothing to do, however, with the re-experiencing by the recipient of the particular work. That stands by itself, a finished product, with a frame round it.

Besides, is it certain (as Tolstoi appears to say) that the artist's *conscious* aim is the transmission or communication of his experiencing to others? May it not be that his conscious aim is to possess his experiencing more completely by giving it expression? Is not this what Croce means by his curt and much-quoted dictum, 'Intuition *is* expression'? Was D. H. Lawrence, though apparently speaking only of himself, voicing a universal truth usually blurred over, when he insisted, not on 'Art for *art's* sake', but on 'Art for *my* sake'?

The whole of the rather dreary debate about communication

and expression becomes almost pointless if we remember that the medium of expression—language especially, but also coloured shapes and musical sounds—is a communicative medium; and that by choosing it, therefore, the artist cannot help doing two things at the same time—expressing his own experiencing and communicating it to others. What *is* true is that the more he thinks about expression for himself, the more private his symbols of the experiencing will tend to become, and so, the less comprehensible to others; and the more he thinks about communication, the more public his symbols will tend to become. In practice, it is safer for the artist to concentrate on getting the thing right for himself than to be always stopping to think of the possible reader, spectator or listener.

Tolstoi would have sharply disagreed with this. Half his book is an attack on 'exclusive' art—art comprehensible only to a restricted group of people. Yet it must have been a half-conscious recognition of the right, nay, the duty, of the artist to be himself, and not merely the mouthpiece of the bulk of mankind, that induced him to qualify his infection theory almost as soon as he had stated it. The feelings transmitted by art, he says, must be fresh; they must be the artist's own, which he has experienced 'in the manner peculiar to himself'. Second-hand feelings are not infectious. 'Only that is a true work of art which transmits fresh feelings not before experienced by man.'

This is mighty surprising. It knocks another large hole in his theory. And he adds some very curious reasoning. 'This', he says, 'explains why children and youths are so strongly impressed by those works of art which first transmit to them feelings they had not experienced before.' Surely the fact that the feelings transmitted to a youthful recipient are new to him is no guarantee that they were new to the transmitter, the artist. What an adult rightly considers to be the most appalling claptrap may be fresh and exciting to a young child.

If we accept for a moment Tolstoi's views that it is the simple feelings, common to all mankind, which good art transmits, how can we expect these to be in any sense new and fresh? Tolstoi, with all the uncritical fervour of a convert, wants to have it both ways. Having been a very great artist himself, he knows as well as anyone else that every good work of art is unique, and that the stereotype is the worst of all the enemies of art; and so he demands 'fresh' feelings from the artist. But, having now taken his stand with simple, peasant folk, and declared open war on his former associates, the sophisticated upper classes of Europe, he will allow

little or nothing to be good in the art favoured by these upper classes. He therefore has to reconcile, if he can, these seeming contradictions in himself. He does so by what is perhaps the most specious of all the arguments in this book. 'Religious perception', he says, 'is nothing else than the first indication of that which is coming into existence, viz. the new relation of man to the world around him'; and again, 'Only on the basis of religious perception (which shows the highest level of life-comprehension reached by the men of a certain period) can fresh emotion, never before felt by man, arise'.

I can make no sense of this. I would have said that the aim of all religions, ancient and modern, is to make everybody coming within their orbit think and feel alike on all questions that are held to be fundamental.

But the sources of Tolstoi's confusion of thought may be stated pretty simply. There are two: first, his determination to subordinate art to religion, whatever the consequences, and secondly, the vagueness of his term, *feeling* or *emotion*. In one breath he insists that the feelings transmitted by art must be common to all mankind; in the next, he insists that these feelings must be new and fresh.

Now it is no doubt true enough that feelings or emotions, if we abstract them out of the constellations of experiencing in which they occur, and assume, for the moment, that they will continue to exist in this abstracted form, must be common to all humanity. It is easy to make a list of these abstractions: anger, fear, love, pity, admiration, and so on and so on. It is easy to add: 'All men feel these.' But this does not help us much. Tolstoi is apt to assume that all men feel these *in the same way* on different occasions. But they don't. How could they? Men do not experience these emotions in abstraction; they experience them as the quality, tone, colour, flavour—we are forced to use inadequate metaphors—of constellations of experiencing. No two constellations can ever be the same; and the differences between them lie principally in their non-emotional constituents. It is not new feelings or emotions (abstracted, and so with nothing to adhere to) that art transmits, whether art is enlisted in the service of religion or not; it is new constellations of experiencing, each of which, being different from all the others, has its own peculiar quality, tone, colour, flavour, or whatever we choose to call it. The supposed fundamental emotions are not fundamental at all; they are abstractions from complex experiencing, useful fictions only so long as we recognize them as fictions, not realities.

As soon as we realize this, we see the way of escape from Tolstoi's dilemma. The seeming paradox, that all art, if worthy the name, must be both old and new, is resolved. All good art transmits fresh constellations of experiencing, but the emotions that accompany these, if we choose to abstract them out and talk about them as if they existed independently, are the old, universal emotions of anger, fear, love, pity, admiration, and so on and so on.

But any such revision of Tolstoi's infection theory carries along with it the rejection of other judgments of his. There is no longer any reason why all good art should be immediately comprehensible to the mass of human beings, independently of their state of development—which he says it must be. Indeed, it is nearer the truth to say that because of the element of novelty in the constellations transmitted by the best art, it takes time for this to become comprehensible to the bulk of mankind. Hence both the opposition, more or less violent at different times, to new movements in literature, painting, sculpture, and music, and the gradual acceptance of them by the general public when the novelty has worn off.

Again, when Tolstoi says that the evolution of feeling proceeds through art, 'feelings less kind and less needful for the well-being of mankind' being replaced by 'others kinder and more needful for that end', we may try to reword this by saying that art tends to replace harmful constellations of experiencing by others less harmful. If we do say this, we must be ready to state the principle on which we determine that Constellation B is less harmful than Constellation A. And this is a task that may defeat us. For myself, I am just as firmly convinced as Tolstoi that the principle must be sought outside art, and not within it. But I cannot accept the principle he laid down. I am inclined to say that the value of art lies, first in its enlargement of human experiencing, and secondly, and perhaps more importantly, in the effect it has upon the human mind as an instrument—tempering it more finely, so that it becomes always more flexible and more discriminative.

Tolstoi's book, perverse though it is at many points, is of great value for three main reasons: because it showed the futility of trying to rest a theory of art on the supposed relation between art and beauty; because it enunciated the principle of the infectiousness of art; and because it refused to allow art to be, in the last resort, its own judge.

# COMMENTARIES

## VANCE PALMER

# *Australian Letter*

If one judged by the newspapers, two things would seem to have been dominating general discussion in this country during the past few months—the coming Olympic Games in Melbourne and the introduction of television. By the time these lines appear in print, the Games will be over, leaving behind, probably, a few more records on the books and, certainly, an elaborate eyesore on the edge of the city in the shape of a reconstructed cricket-ground, fitted with stands to hold 120,000 people and too large for anything but spectacular displays.

Once the Melbourne Cricket Ground was a very pleasant place, with some suggestion of the village green in its spread of springy turf and two or three remaining trees. Perhaps the gradual extensions carried out over the last fifty years have been necessary, but their effect has been to create a widening gap, in sight and sympathy, between players and public. Not a happy type of development, this, either in the theatre or the sporting arena. I remember, years ago, seeing a delightful performance of Lady Gregory's *Workhouse Ward* at a small London theatre. So successful was it that it was seized upon by an entrepreneur with more avarice than judgment and made a feature at the Coliseum. As might have been expected the result was disastrous: in that huge auditorium the humorous exchanges of the two old men in their beds, and even their human personalities, dwindled to nothing, and one was conscious of longing intensely for the curtain to come down on the tiny nightmare and rise again on something large and spectacular. It is almost certain that crowd-tensions and barracking are increased by the frustrations caused by the growing distance between the spectator and the diminished figures in the middle.

I don't know whether a consciousness of this has led supporters of television to harp on the way it brings the players closer to the public again; so close that you may follow the words forming on their lips after a painful hit or a heavy tackle. Most things that could have been said in favour of the new medium have been said with tiresome iteration during the past few months since it is

plain that unless enough people can be persuaded to buy television sets quickly, those investing in the enterprise will lose a lot of money. And as those investing are mainly connected with newspapers, it might appear as if T.V. was being hailed enthusiastically. Yet there is a good deal of vigorous criticism of its introduction at the present time when every penny is needed for such basic services as schools, housing, hospitals and roads. Can we afford, it is asked, to divert men and materials to the construction of television sets and stations and the production of programmes? And won't the advertisers who use its services take it out of the community in increased costs?

An even more serious criticism is that which sees it as another agency for controlling news, ideas, standards of value and, to a certain extent, of artistic taste. Sir Richard Boyer, chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, has no doubts of its efficacy. Speaking of its opening sessions in November, he said recently: 'It can never be merely a background to conversation or to other activities, and precisely because it demands and receives our full concentration it has an effect upon our opinion and values which no other medium hitherto has approached.'

Sir Richard, it is true, saw some danger in this, but the dominant note in his voice was pleasant anticipation of the prospect ahead. As head of the A.B.C. he will have some influence on the standards of impartiality and taste set by television programmes, and no doubt will try and keep them on as high a level as possible. But the national station is only one of five; commercial licences have been granted to four other stations in which different newspapers hold the chief interest, and Sir Richard's control over these is likely to be very shadowy indeed.

Besides, though the A.B.C. over which he presides has done a great deal to supply the country with good music, its general cultural standards are not remarkably high and its commentaries on public affairs have not risen above newspaper level in their objectivity or range of information. Recently, I think, they have deteriorated. It is not that they have been markedly partisan, but when dealing with such countries as China or Soviet Russia, there has been an increasing disposition to use journalistic clichés of opinion or phrase. An atmosphere can be created by such repetitions ('the free world', 'the totalitarian countries') that makes the mildest adventures of independent thought seem dangerously eruptive.

Thus there are good reasons for not welcoming a new medium that has won such a widespread reputation for influencing opinions and values. The press, radio, and newsreels are already sufficiently

formidable in their control over these. As for the cultural side of television there is not much basis for high expectations. There will be a chance for people in their homes to participate visually in sport and other spectacles and no doubt mobile television vans will exploit whatever is thought to be pictorial in our daily life; but for plays and theatrical entertainments we will be largely dependent, at least for a time, on filmed products, probably of the most inexpensive kind. Programmes are costly and call for skilled producers; our stations seem to be relying on men who have had their training in radio and will be carrying on two different kinds of jobs at the same time.

Lately the local drama has been given a lift by the production of an original play, *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, by the Elizabethan Theatre Trust; it is not a masterpiece but such exhibitions of verbal raciness and theatrical skill are rare enough on our stage to make it welcome. The success of this play has been paralleled by that of two books, differing greatly in style and outlook. The first, Alan Marshall's *I Can Jump Puddles* is a sort of autobiography, an ebullient account of the author's boyhood and upbringing that not only tells a personal story but brings to life a small bush settlement of forty years ago with its varying interests and characters. Alan Marshall is something of a character himself. When a child, he was crippled by polio and seemed doomed to spend his days on crutches or in an invalid's chair; but he set himself steadily to combat his disability and his triumph, in its smaller sphere, has been as great as Roosevelt's. No one who meets him now ever thinks of him as a cripple. As a boy he learnt to ride, to swim, to share the sports of other boys; as a man he takes an active part in the life of the community. Driving his own car, he has made a couple of journeys across the continent and has written with insight about the aboriginals; he even made difficult journeys overseas at the end of the last war and recently took part, with a group, in a mission to China, penetrating to odd corners of Mongolia to satisfy a boyish curiosity about the desert horsemen, his father having been a famous horse-breaker in his day.

Personally, Alan Marshall is held in deep affection by those who know him, and their number is large, for he is a lively raconteur and is always ready to entertain social gatherings with accounts of his travels. I think there can have been few more vivid descriptions of the new China than the one I heard him give a couple of months ago to a party of writers; it was a subtle mixture of humour, observation and vision. There is no difficulty in accounting for the success of *I Can Jump Puddles*. Marshall has more than a trace of

Mark Twain's gift for being able to write about youth in a way acceptable to young people of all ages and polio itself is a thing that touches a nerve in the general mind.

The success of Patrick White's *The Tree of Man* is more difficult to explain. It is a long book, difficult in style, and with no popular ingredients; although the general outlook might be called fashionable if the word could be used without a sneer. It was probably the extreme enthusiasm with which *The Tree of Man* was received by English and American critics that created such a demand for it here, for its reception by our own critics was distinctly cool. Patrick White has recently returned after a long absence abroad. He has been writing for over twenty years, first poetry and then novels, but apparently found it hard to shake himself free from the literary influences of the day and achieve a style and idiom of his own. His first novel, *Happy Valley* (published in 1939), seemed, in spite of its force and narrative competence, to be too full of Joycean echoes to be taken quite seriously, and his second and third novels, also tentative and experimental, were buried under the debris of war. With *The Tree of Man*, however, he has found not only himself but his audience. It is a stark novel, dealing mainly with the relations between a pioneering couple, both inarticulate, and though it takes in a lifetime of events it is neither atmospheric nor dramatic. The figures are as externally bare as blocks of stone, and the landscape and movement of the bush are treated abstractly, in the manner of a primitive painting by Drysdale or Sidney Nolan; the whole interest is in the inner life of the characters. Altogether it is an impressive piece of work and it seems strange to see it taking its sombre place among the best-sellers.

E. K. BRAYBROOKE

# *The Future of Antarctica: Political and Legal*

It is impossible to read accounts of the preparations for the New Zealand expedition to Antarctica without being impressed by the careful attention which is paid to detail in order to get things exactly right. This contrasts rather oddly with the want of exact

thought usually displayed in consideration of the political or legal problems concerning Antarctica. A prime example of this sloppiness of thought—or perhaps of the consequences it may bring in its train—is the confusion over New Zealand's title to the Ross Dependency. The popular belief is, no doubt, that the Dependency is New Zealand territory. Strictly speaking, the Dependency is a British settlement, over which Great Britain claims sovereignty, but which is administered on her behalf by New Zealand. The power of administration thus exercised is, however, insecurely founded. The initial delegation of authority in and over the Dependency was made to the Governor-General of New Zealand, as Governor of the Dependency, by an Order in Council under the British Settlements Act, 1887. Nobody seems to have been overmuch troubled, then or later, by the fact that the Act authorized the delegation of the powers of the Crown to 'any three or more persons within the settlement'. Obviously the Governor-General is not a trinity; equally obviously (despite the recent assertion of a prominent member of the New Zealand Antarctic Society that 'New Zealand should identify herself *more closely* with the Antarctic') Government House, Wellington, is not within the Ross Dependency. It is true that an amendment to the principal Act, passed in 1945, made future appointments in similar circumstances lawful. It is doubtful whether the amending Act operates retrospectively to validate the Order in Council of 1923, nor has anyone thought the matter important enough to move in the direction of renewing and thus validating the appointment. Doubtless such authority as New Zealand is able to exercise in the Dependency is exercised with the full concurrence of Great Britain; but to the lawyer's eye the 'chain of title' is sadly defective.

Not only do the authorities concerned appear to have thought that the matter of transferring jurisdiction over the Dependency, with its attendant responsibility for so acting as to keep alive such legal claims as Great Britain might have in the area, was hardly worth taking much trouble about, but there is an unfortunate touch of comic-opera ineffectiveness about the efforts which have been made to exercise the authority so conferred. Comic opera touches seem to be inseparable from attempts to assert and maintain claims to sovereignty over remote but possibly important areas of the world's land surface. Canada has for many years had an interest in maintaining a claim to an uninhabited island in the Canadian Arctic known as Ellesmere Island. In order to do this, according to one writer, she has at various times established a mounted police post, presumably to check the criminal tendencies

of the non-existent inhabitants, set up a post office to collect and deliver their non-existent mail, and made all necessary arrangements to take a census of their non-existent number. New Zealand's manifestations of 'sovereignty' in the Antarctic seem hardly less odd. First there were the attempts in the 1920's to license and regulate whaling in the Dependency. Considering that jurisdiction at international law extended (as a later Act of Parliament acknowledged) only over the land and the territorial waters to a distance of three nautical miles seaward, and that large areas of these territorial waters are covered by barrier ice, while the remainder were and still are unlikely to be the venue of whale hunting except casually and accidentally, these attempts appear singularly ineffective. It is true that for some unexplained reason at least one Norwegian whaling firm took these regulations and their British precursors seriously enough to pay for some years an annual licence fee and royalties for the 'privilege' of whaling in waters which were free to all. The firm in question was using a floating factory ship, which made it unnecessary to use shore bases for any part of the whaling operation; yet the use of the shore for bases was about the only part of the activity which New Zealand could legally claim to regulate. Perhaps the partners thought that they might establish some shadowy title to priority of claim if jurisdiction over the areas of high sea involved were ever established. A good many claims to Antarctic territory seem to be made in much the same frame of mind. But New Zealand's confessed inability to suppress unlicensed whaling in competition with them must soon have convinced them that the 'licence' was not worth having. Despite all that has been said about the extravagant nature of these claims to jurisdiction, however, and their practical unenforceability, sufficient misgiving was caused to the Norwegian whaling interests to provoke Norway to stake out in 1939 her own claim to an extensive sector of the Antarctic.

Some years later there followed the protests, delivered through the British Ambassador at Washington, against the proposal that the American postal authorities should commission one or more members of the 1934-5 Byrd Expedition to set up a United States post office at 'Little America'. This, it was asserted, was a potential violation of New Zealand sovereignty, even though all allowances must be made for the absence of regular postal facilities in the Dependency. At the same time it was pointed out that New Zealand's permission should really have been asked before plans were made to undertake aeroplane flights over her Antarctic territory, and (crowning it all) that it would have been better if a trans-

mitting licence had been taken out for the Expedition's radio transmitter! The protests were received by the United States but rejected in an informal Note, which pointed out that, although the United States did not want to discuss the matter formally, she was not prepared to recognize that any State could legally claim to exercise exclusive sovereignty over the Antarctic. This is an attitude which the United States authorities have consistently maintained, even to the extent of failing to ratify the extensive claims to Antarctic territory made on her behalf by Lincoln Ellsworth and other explorers.

It is only fair to say that the New Zealand Government itself is not to blame for the apparent silliness of most of these activities. In the absence of any clear-cut rules of international law governing the question how far and by what means exclusive sovereignty can be acquired over such territories as the Antarctic, States which think that they have valid reasons for wanting to acquire such sovereignty must try to establish their claims by conduct as nearly similar as possible to that which would be sufficient to establish and maintain valid claims over inhabitable and inhabited areas of the world. Discovery of new territory may be a foundation of title; but it cannot prevail against adverse occupation. There must be a show of settlement, or at the least of administration, by any State which wishes to keep its inchoate title alive. To be faithful to the trust imposed upon them in 1923 the New Zealand authorities were bound to act as they did. And perhaps so long as there was little general interest displayed in the Antarctic continent there was some excuse for simply accepting the uncertainty of traditional international law and maintaining a fiction of administrative control over the Dependency. It could do no harm; it might at the very least entitle New Zealand to a voice in any international conference which might in the future be prepared to tackle the problem of Antarctica; it might even establish priority of claim to the allocation of a definite share in the continent, if such a conference should decide to deal with the problem in this way. But now that the nations are becoming increasingly conscious of the apparent potentialities of Antarctica, it is time to do some hard and exact thinking about the future, legal and political, of this still mysterious continent.

It is clear that the appropriateness of what may be called the 'traditional' view, that Antarctica may be parcelled out among claimant nations in exactly the same way as the other continents of the world have been parcelled out, can be determined only after some consideration of the geographical and economic facts. This

consideration will also help in an evaluation of the alternatives to the traditional view which have been offered. In the first place, Antarctica is of all continents the most inhospitable to man. It lacks permanent inhabitants, whether indigenous or otherwise. Although, if the necessity proved sufficient, permanent settlements could no doubt be set up, in certain areas at any rate, the acquisition of territory in Antarctica is unlikely to solve problems created by the pressure of expanding populations. In the second place, the economic value of the continent would seem to be confined to the substantial mineral resources believed to exist. No satisfactory plan has so far been put forward for working minerals which in general lie under a perpetual covering of ice, of thickness varying between an estimated nine hundred feet and an estimated six thousand feet. Experts do not agree even on the question whether such a plan can be devised. It seems pretty obvious to the thoughtful layman that those who assert that the mineral wealth of Antarctica can be exploited have given the barest minimum of thought to the technical problems involved, both in working the minerals and in transporting them through the ice-strewn and stormy Antarctic seas. Any suggestion that there is still a wealth of marine life awaiting exploitation is largely beside the point, as most of it is on the high seas not subject to appropriation by any one State, though the possibility that claims to the continental shelf may have validity may put a slightly different complexion on this. The only 'shore-based' exploitation of marine life which has been suggested is the possibility that the fur seal population may be regenerated and the industry revived. Experts differ again, moreover, on the question whether the Antarctic may be of value in providing bases for a South Polar counterpart to commercial air routes over the Arctic. All in all, immediate prospects of economic gain from exclusive possession of any area of the Antarctic seem pretty slender, and long term prospects of such gain highly speculative.

Some reference should finally be made to the potential strategic importance of Antarctica. There is little doubt that the relative closeness of the Antarctic continent to South America, and the fact that the trade route round Cape Horn would be extremely vulnerable to attack from an enemy based on the peninsula of Graham Land, weigh heavily with the Governments of the United Kingdom, Argentina and Chile in their refusal to compromise their overlapping 'sector' claims. On the other hand, opinions may well differ as to the strategic value of the other side of the continent as a base from which to launch an attack on New Zealand,

Australia, or areas further north. The possibility of such a use of the Antarctic continent may well be as speculative as the possibility of economic gain from the area; but it is a factor to be taken into account.

In the light of these facts, the attempts so far made to assert 'sovereignty' over large areas of the Antarctic continent seem unrealistic. Unrealistic in area they certainly are. For Great Britain to claim sovereignty over almost two-thirds of the continent on the strength of occasional voyages of coastal discovery, the slightest of penetration inland, and such fictional administration in the British, Australian, and New Zealand sectors as has already been described with reference to the last, is nonsensical. It would be more in accordance with sober fact if these claims were described, as the Great Powers at the end of the nineteenth century described analogous claims to areas of the continent of Africa which they were not immediately in a position to subdue, as 'spheres of influence'. Even so there would be a significant difference. For spheres of influence in Africa were allotted and recognized by agreement of the Powers concerned. But in the Antarctic, though Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Norway and France will no doubt mutually respect one another's claims, the claims of Great Britain, Argentina and Chile are mutually irreconcilable. Moreover, there is no certainty that latecomers in the race for Antarctic 'sovereignty' will not stake claims to sectors overlapping existing sectors. The vast 'Australian' sector seems peculiarly vulnerable to this; and it is not generally known that in 1939 Germany claimed a truncated sector known as Neuschwabenland in the area of the Norwegian sector, a claim which may yet be revived.

Apart altogether from the question of legality, there is the question of the morality of these vast claims. It is true that those nations which were first in the field of Antarctic exploration and have maintained their interest in that area have established a kind of priority there; at the very least they ought not to be elbowed out by newcomers. But it would be going too far to assert that they had become entitled in perpetuity to exclude all other nations from a share in the economic resources of the vast territories they have claimed. If indeed it should turn out that the resources were there and were exploitable, but that the State claiming sovereignty lacked sufficient economic power to exploit them (and this might well prove to be the case with New Zealand) it would be the sheerest dog-in-the-mangerism to exclude a nation which possessed that power, solely on the grounds of so slenderly-based a priority. An application of these principles might well suggest a settlement

of the conflict of sovereignties between Great Britain, Argentina and Chile in relation to the sectors claimed by each (excluding for the moment the question of sovereignty over the Falkland Islands themselves, which is also in dispute, and the strategic considerations hinted at above). A simple holding that the claims, of each State were far too extravagant could lead to a decision either that the area now covered by the overlapping sectors should be parcelled out among the three, or that Great Gritain's admitted interest in the Antarctic was already well served by her claims in respect of the areas presently administered on her behalf by Australia and New Zealand, and she should give up her interest in the area, which could then be divided between Chile and Argentina. Or, to come nearer home, though it would perhaps not be easy at the moment to support a claim by the United States to the Ross Dependency, on the grounds that her efforts at settlement, the extent of her explorations and her expenditure of resources in recent years far exceeded those of the nominal sovereign, a different complexion might well be put on the matter should an American expedition discover mineral wealth in the Dependency which the United States with her vast technological resources could win and transport from the area, and should the United States authorities think it necessary to safeguard themselves by breaking with their hitherto-accepted policy and staking out a claim to sovereignty over the whole or some part of the Dependency.

The above reflections suggest that the present situation, in which individual States claim exclusive sovereignty over specific portions of the Antarctic continent, is difficult to justify on legal or on moral grounds. What then are the alternatives? They seem to be two. Either the Antarctic should be put under the control of the United Nations, or it should be recognized that it is inherently not susceptible of appropriation by any one state, like the high seas, and should be treated as such. Both have been suggested in the past.

There is less difference between these two suggestions than might at first appear. Although assimilation of the régime of the Antarctic to that of the high seas would have the apparent effect of making the continent free to all, it must be realized that there is an increasing tendency towards international regulation of conflicts of interest which arise in exploitation of the riches of the sea, exemplified by the international control of the whaling industry, as well as an increasing movement towards recognizing that more extensive areas of the sea than formerly may be treated as subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the littoral State and

more closely assimilated to State territory. It may be argued from these facts that simply to agree to treat the Antarctic as if it were high sea will not exclude the possibility of international regulation, which may ultimately involve action in some way by the United Nations; nor will it necessarily exclude the possibility of some form of individual appropriation of selected areas, with attendant clashes of interest which again may come within the purview of the United Nations. Further, to establish such a régime for the Antarctic would require the consent of the states of the world community, since it would be tantamount to establishing a new rule of international law. It would seem more sensible to move directly towards putting the whole area under the jurisdiction of the United Nations. Moreover, one might hazard the view that to attempt to establish the principle that the Antarctic should be 'free for all' smacks too much of rugged individualism to appeal to mid-twentieth century thinking. For all these considerations, therefore, the placing of the Antarctic under some form of United Nations control appears to be the only practicable alternative to the present régime.

There have been a number of proposals with this end in view. So far they do not appear to have met with the consideration they deserve. According to a French writer, New Zealand advanced such a proposal as far back as 1941; he does not disclose its fate, but it would appear to have aroused little interest, as was perhaps natural at that time. The United States, which has refused both to recognize other claims to exclusive sovereignty in the Antarctic and to advance such claims herself, is said to have been consistently in favour of some such idea. Indeed, in 1948, when the conflict between Great Britain, Argentina and Chile flared up, the United States took the initiative in proposing a conference of the eight interested nations to discuss the future of Antarctica. It was believed at the time that proposals for international control were to be advocated there. Great Britain is said to have been favourably disposed to discuss the matter. The New Zealand Government's attitude was never made public. Unfortunately the conference did not take place; as might have been expected, the proposal was rejected by Argentina and Chile and, rather more surprisingly, by Norway. When it was freely rumoured during the preparations for the present intensive exploration of Antarctica that the United States authorities had tentative plans for exploding an atom bomb in the area the Hon. Mr Nash used the dangers of such a proposal to point up once again the need for United Nations control. No official reactions to the suggestion appear to have been recorded.

As it happens, the Americans themselves seem to have been alive to the dangers of the rumoured explosion, because when a definite proposal to that effect was later made, it was turned down by the authorities. The latest advocate of United Nations control was Admiral Byrd, in an address to Congress in May of this year. The reported reaction to this in Australia was a statement that the Australian Government was perfectly satisfied with the present position, an attitude of mind which, with respect, seems curiously short-sighted.

As has already been suggested, the proposal has the great merit of being generally in tune with mid-twentieth century thinking. There is an increasing tendency towards the view that the resources of any community ought to be shared to the full by the members of that community, coupled with an insistence that persons who have the control of those resources must make full use of them, and must not waste or squander them to the community's detriment. The recent storm in England over the eviction of an incompetent farmer and her daughter from their farm home comes as a reminder that this view has already found expression in national law. It is true that the details of any such proposal have yet to be fully worked out; but it is to be assumed that a key provision of any such plan would be that there should be complete freedom of access to all nations for scientific and other expeditions, together with provision for controlling and licensing the exploitation of such natural resources as may be discovered and prove workable. Similar provisions may be envisaged for licensing the setting up of such landing and harbour facilities as it might be possible to establish, the creation and maintenance of air bases, and the establishment of permanent or semi-permanent scientific bases. It would undoubtedly be necessary for such a proposal to provide also for the permanent neutralization or demilitarization of Antarctica, so as to allay the fears of surrounding countries that it might be used as a base from which to launch attacks upon them or harry their shipping or aircraft.

It is relatively easy to forecast the key points in such a plan; it is by no means so easy to work out its details. In the first place, after the key points were settled, the problem of administration would not be easy to solve. Some administration of such a plan would undoubtedly be necessary. Not all of those who have made the suggestion of United Nations control have used the word 'Trusteeship' to describe it; nor has it been used here. But it is clear that the provisions of Chapter XII of the Charter seem to offer the most convenient machinery for putting such control into

effect. The accepted pattern of Trusteeship is, however, that the Trust territory is placed under the control of an Administering Power. Two obvious difficulties arise. First, the Antarctic continent is so large that no one Power, except perhaps the United States, could adequately administer the whole of it. It is unlikely that that proposal would be acceptable to the Soviet bloc, to begin with; and there might be objections from other quarters. The alternative would be to parcel the Antarctic out for administration, no doubt on the sector principle, among the nations currently interested in the area, with or without additions. If the decision on allocation were acceptable it would at least put an end to the possibility of boundary disputes and conflicting territorial claims, but it would not necessarily put an end to suspicions and tensions between the administering Powers themselves. This is the more likely in that adequate checks by the United Nations authorities on the observance by all administering Powers of the provisions of the overall plan, especially those which demilitarize the area, would appear to be extremely difficult to devise.

In short, while the proposal for United Nations control of Antarctica is an obvious and sensible solution of a problem to which the current rules of international law provide no satisfactory answer, and to which a new solution in keeping with geographical and economic realities must be found, considerable difficulties may be envisaged both in drafting a satisfactory plan and in securing its acceptance by the interested nations. It is to be hoped, however, that if proposals of this sort are officially put forward the New Zealand Government will be prepared to consider them carefully on their merits, and not reject them out of hand, as the Government of Australia seems inclined to do. One might indeed go so far as to hope that New Zealand should take the lead in formulating such proposals. There is in this country at the moment a growing interest in the problems of Antarctic travel and exploration. It would be a good thing if a similar interest were taken in the political and legal problems raised by Antarctica.

*September 1956*

DOROTHEA TURNER

# *The National Orchestra*

THE formation of the National Orchestra ten years ago restored music as a profession in New Zealand. The factors that had destroyed musical life in the late 1920's were still more potent in 1946, and only an official move, with the use of public funds, could hope to reshape it. The years between are a grim memory. Belief in concert life seemed to have gone. A few, like Mr Vincent Aspey, had somehow remained musicians during the dead years, and were there to help with the renaissance. Without them we might be waiting still.

An overseas musician told me that the most admirable of New Zealanders shared a distinctive trait—courage in loneliness. If anyone can find the Latin, I suggest this as a motto for the National Orchestra and its resident conductors. They will need it for some time yet.

The kind of security the National Orchestra gives our music is, of course, much more than a matter of livelihood. It is security that one more set of people can work out their talents at a high level in the country where they grew up, and it covers a great many musicians who are not members of the Orchestra. In oratorio singing—probably our oldest musical tradition—the best choirs have the Orchestra's partnership now for some of their performances. *The Dream of Gerontius* and *Belshazzar's Feast* sung by the Christchurch Harmonic Society, and the Schola Cantorum's performance of Bach's *Mass in B Minor* are ones I recall with special delight. These were perhaps a natural development, once the Orchestra existed, the choirs being already well established. But the New Zealand Opera Company's remarkable production of *The Medium*, which Mr Robertson conducted in Wellington last year, suddenly proved a native aptitude for opera that few of us had anticipated. My memory of this focuses on Miss Rawlinson's first magnificent entry—a moment brilliant in itself, and significantly full of promise for an operatic life in New Zealand.

When discussion of the National Orchestra moves from clear-cut occasions to assessment of policy and standards, no two New Zealanders easily understand each other. The only two audiences I know—those of Auckland and Wellington—have very different viewpoints, and from conversations and written comment I gather

that there is as much variety of outlook in the places I do not know. Confusion is added by individuals being inconsistent with themselves from year to year. The personal yardstick, the mental image which tells what we should expect of any concert, is usually formed by precedents, and we have no local precedents for the National Orchestra. The image shifts; we are never quite sure how well we should ask the Orchestra to play.

My yardstick settled in 1952, at four concerts given under Senor Castro. The Orchestra was weak in two or three places which have been strengthened since Mr Robertson came. We needed more strings, as always. The programmes were not what Senor Castro would have given if he had had time to know his players. But as playing, as interpretation, the concerts left me more than content.

Auckland has always tended to pitch its expectations high. This audience had the lion's share of the guest conductors in the early years, and grew used to finding the Orchestra vastly different from one concert to another. The players were usually remembered by their best playing, and lapses from this were debited to the conducting. Concerts that fell short of the best fell further when faced with a disappointed audience, and some were downright gloomy. Wellington's regular concerts, on the other hand, have always seemed to me cheerful and competent. I have given the Auckland experience, because this centre has become a problem. It should be the Orchestra's most profitable audience, and often is not. We have to try to find out why, and it must be emphasized that Auckland is no more dutiful to its local societies than to the National Orchestra. The Auckland background may also explain why the Orchestra's history looks to me like the histories that go by kings and dates. But as conductors are made, not born, they are presidents rather than kings, and we must notice how they are appointed, and by whom, and for how long.

The appointment of Mr Andersen Tyrer was a naive blunder. Mr Bowles's appointment was a mistake of another kind; the post had been advertised and he looked well on paper. Let us remember his Elgar and forget the rest.

There is only one sensible way to appoint a conductor—if his work is not on records or within the orbit of leading critics—and that is to listen to what he makes of an orchestra and to what other conductors make of the same orchestra. The listening should be done by someone whose personal happiness depends on there being fine orchestral concerts in New Zealand for the following two or three years. Testimonials are chancy. Not everyone in Europe

rates our music highly. There may even be living descendants of the man who said, 'But as for you! . . . My language fails! Go out and govern New South Wales!'

Mr Braithwaite's interim appointment lasted for nearly two seasons. Suddenly the music was safe, orthodox, and nothing to blush for. It was also strangely characterless, without footholds for the memory.

These years were constructive in that the Orchestra learned a repertoire that was remarkably extensive, especially when we consider the number of novices who were taken on board from time to time. The scope of the programmes became very much that of the British concert halls, with similar reticence about living foreign composers. A serious limitation remained in the interpretation. Even if we put aside Mr Bowles as unclassifiable, the conducting was overwhelmingly British, which is not a limitation British audiences impose on themselves.

During this period the Orchestra explored its audiences, and discovered which places wanted it most. It also learned the need to be based on Wellington, which I am sure would have been unacceptable as an initial policy.

In other ways these years were wasted. If the importance of good and varied conducting had been understood, the Orchestra could have got a better hold on the post-war audience which came out eager for live experience. It was a bad period to be throwing points away, because long-playing records and hi-fi sets were creeping up. People could soak themselves in effortless music, dulling their appetites and weakening their bodies for the concert hall. Recording equipment often became an end in itself, giving its owners an illusion of being in some way proprietors of the orchestras who played on the records they bought.

Mr Robertson, arriving in 1954, grasped our situation with quick-witted energy and courage, seeing what must be done at once and what might usefully be tried. His music has been delivered punctually and honestly, and is very accurate. Small, unpromising occasions are given the same respect as obviously important ones. We have felt sure of his genuine interest in us, fair dealings and agreeableness, as well as professional competence. It is a pleasant atmosphere.

But the sound the Orchestra makes these days seems to me shallow and monotonous. One work after another goes through with scarcely a change of depth or colour; the stature and expressiveness of a good deal that is played is sadly diminished. About half the members in the Orchestra are known as individual players

with plenty of capacity for good and varied tone, and as a body they have shown these qualities from time to time. Tone is not, of course, a first requirement with all listeners. Some put rhythm first, or form, or score-reading, or cultural interest. But it is tone, I believe, that has the most direct appeal to the heart, and it is the heart that has to be moved if children are to be held from play and old men from the chimney corner.

A defect like this would be of much less account if we did not stabilize it by putting Orchestra and conductor face to face for hours a day on almost every day of the year. Our monstrous and abnormal practice also condemns the conductor to pump himself dry for two or three years, without being stimulated by another man's orchestra. When a baton changes hands, there are sometimes beautiful transition concerts—I remember two of Dr Bainton's—where the failings of both the past and present conductor seem to cancel out, and their strengths combine in the music. It remains to be seen what mark Sir Bernard Heinze's strident and unreflective energy leaves on the Orchestra, but he is not what I would have prescribed. We must at least see that the Orchestra and its resident conductors are given more frequent relief from a situation that can be mutually destructive.

I think we should also grow out of expecting our resident conductors to act as country storekeepers, stocking everything that anyone in their district might take a fancy to. Many of us can trace each widening of our musical affections to the times when we heard musicians play what they cared most about. The classical example is Sir Thomas Beecham's conversion of his audiences to Delius, an otherwise unpopular composer. To be supremely at home in one or two schools of music is all we can ask of any musician. If we have one good resident conductor every two or three years, and three or four visiting conductors each year bringing their own programmes, we shall have heard everything superbly done in the end.

The immediate need of the National Orchestra, as I see it, is to be given a separate administration, and removed from the care of the N.Z.B.S. which has never been geared to handle its special requirements. We might as reasonably have asked the N.Z.B.S. to conduct the Springboks' tour and to appoint the All Blacks' coach and selectors. Certain conventions of symphony orchestras and, indeed, most of music's peculiar and ruthless requirements, are the antithesis of public service thought. It is likely, too, that the damaging economies imposed on the Orchestra—the chronic shortage of players, the lack of guest conductors, and the very undigni-

fied salary paid our resident conductor—are the result of the automatic wing-clipping so many departmental ventures suffer. The people most likely to shape a sound orchestral policy, and make it comprehensible to the government and the public, are the ones who care more about symphony concerts than about any other way of passing an evening. I suggest that a separate fund be set aside for the National Orchestra, to be administered by a committee, very much as the State Literary Fund is administered.

Even under the most inspired guidance, the Orchestra appears to me to face two long difficulties, neither of which is money. The first is the formidable wear and tear on the players. It is hard to see how travelling can be much reduced, and there will always be players who cannot stand it for long.

The other is a problem common to all the arts in New Zealand. Many of the scenes and activities around us have a magnificence that grips the young and teaches them to look for the same quality in everything else, including music. To hold people who hunger for a big idea, we may have to think more simply about the power of music, and trust it to be accepted on its own terms. I doubt whether a permanent audience can be built up by what is known as 'an intelligent interest in music', by explanations, or by concerts that go out to entice listeners. These measures may be good in themselves and they improve the orchestra's standing with the non-musical which is still, unhappily, a consideration. But if the new audience is not led through to the great works in their full stature, it will probably drift off again. And if full-statured music is there, does anyone need preparation? I doubt it, but there is no knowing, because the regular presentation of important music, importantly delivered, is something we have not yet tried.

# REVIEWS

ERIC LEE-JOHNSON. With a biographical introduction by E. H. McCormick. Edited by Janet Paul. *Paul's Book Arcade*. 18s. 6d.

THIS BOOK, long awaited, was worth waiting for. It sums up, at what is apparently a moment of pause, the work of one of New Zealand's most talented and delightful painters, a man whose achievement simply in the documentary province of portraying a district and a way of life is itself a remarkable contribution to our national self-awareness.

The biographical introduction by E. H. McCormick is alone worth the money, astringent, clairvoyant and soberly inspired. The facts of Lee-Johnson's life make him an untypical New Zealander —it is the unusual which creates the unusual: normality is a slavery we all too eagerly embrace. Born in Fiji, with a putative trace-element on his English-New Zealand mother's side mingled with the dinkum Aussie of his father, he came to New Zealand as an infant and was brought up in a series of small country towns, whose list, as Mr McCormick says, 'reads like a litany of provincial Auckland, a poem whose prose substance is butter-fat, sale-yards, straggling main streets, two-storeyed public houses, flimsy wooden shops'. The family moved frequently. When Lee-Johnson attended the Elam School of Art, he commuted daily the thirty-six miles from Tuakau: altogether he had need of the habitual cheerfulness with which he is credited.

When he left Elam, Lee-Johnson needed to earn his living: he earned it as a commercial artist. In 1930, armed with a modicum of experience and the winging godwit's serene optimism, he hit London. London admitted him, somewhat grudgingly, to a reasonably successful career in advertising, and to certain opportunities to gaze out at wider horizons, until at last his eye focused on New Zealand again. He came back in 1938 to work for one of the more enterprising of local advertising agencies. A few months later he suffered the breakdown in health which was to interrupt his successful commercial career.

It is not, I think, too fanciful to link Lee-Johnson's first ill-health with his development as a painter. It provided the means of his escape from the treadmill of the normal, and perhaps provided also that moral jolt which turned him from a competent, biddable servant of commerce into an original artist who refused to do anything except the work he valued himself—and did it with such gusto and verve as long as his health lasted. Unfortunately he does not seem today to be able to do as much as his friends could wish. But this should not be exaggerated: there are interesting works in this book dated 1954 and 1955.

Lee-Johnson has had good friends. Mr McCormick chronicles his

reception into the bosom of the 'Auckland intelligentsia'—haunted by 'the instability of modern civilisation and the necessity for individual self-sufficiency'. While Mr McCormick gently mocks this group's passionate nonconformity, he at the same time acknowledges its sincerity and shows that the Lee-Johnsons at least did not give up the struggle for purity and integrity when civilization obstinately failed to collapse. They pursued it, rigorously enough, in a series of borrowed homes in remote beautiful places whose owners' benevolence was sometimes patchy. (But some, like T. T. Bond, gave invaluable help at a decisive moment.) These sojourns included Coromandel and the far North, where Lee-Johnson was to find the richest emotional treasure.

Two influences strongly affected Lee-Johnson's development as an artist—his original training at Elam—which 'gave us drawing, drawing and more drawing, and turned some of us into draughtsmen'—and his long apprenticeship to the sorceries of advertising and industrial design. Even if Elam was timid and narrow, what it did do, it did well. Even if an agency is the ruin of talent, it first makes sure the talent is used. A tyranny to revolt against has its own value. And Lee-Johnson is a superb draughtsman.

This helps to make the monochrome reproductions among these thirty-three plates (there are a dozen or so drawings as well) a far more effective presentation of his opus than would be the case with most artists, and this is all the more paradoxical in view of my abiding memory of the one exhibition of his I have seen (the 1948 Dunedin exhibition), which was of delight in a really thrilling use of colour—audacious, subtle and assured. None the less it is a pity that so few of these plates are in colour. But then the standards of colour reproduction in New Zealand are so appalling that it is often a relief when we are not treated to it. This cynicism is appropriate to *Seaworn Stone, Shell and Wood* which is quite grotesquely inadequate. On the other hand *Landscape with Church, Pakanae* and *Crayon and Line* are good. *House at Omapere* may also be faithfully reproduced, but it is unfortunately a dull picture, however abundantly documentary.

Primarily Lee-Johnson is not a landscape painter: he prefers the works of man, or objects—tree trunks, shells, stones—which are virtually abstract form. The one picture, *Crayon and Line*, which is a technical abstract is crowded, deliciously, with all sorts of stylized motifs with a strong Maori flavour. But when he paints old buildings—his favourite subject—he must put them in their landscape setting. Mr McCormick talks of his 'gaunt embowered houses', forgetting that it is Lee-Johnson who does the embowering, does it with a panache none the less valid for being theatrical.

Some people resent their favourite sons being thought less than original. Mr McCormick fulminates against 'those ingenious pedants who succeed in tracing every element in the work of a New Zealand painter—or poet—to some overseas source', and no doubt I

risk his censure when I suggest that Lee-Johnson may owe something in this heightened, dramatic treatment of old buildings to John Piper. Before I conclude these heinous accusations, I might mention that the thought did cross my mind that Christopher Perkins's *Frozen Fire* (painted about 1931) is a far more valuable work than *The Slain Tree* (1945)—whose anthropomorphous posturing I cordially dislike—and if it did not inspire it, at least anticipated it.

Actually I don't care a biscuit about originality and only half a biscuit about New Zealandness. It is success that matters. And Lee-Johnson, this book shows, is exhilaratingly successful. No other painter has moved into the contorted volcanic landscape of the North and made it so splendidly his territory, complete with crazy, sun-drenched, rotting buildings and the mostly Maori inhabitants of these haunted, tottering ghosts of a European respectability, pursued but never attained. Lee-Johnson's pictures, as Mr McCormick says, 'have transformed (or, rather, have created) our vision of the North'. The documentary character of his work is inescapable. Lee-Johnson does not close his eyes to the social contexts of his subjects, and that comes through because of his honesty and simplicity in many of his pictures. He offers us all that we are usually given by the novelist or diarist of travel. It is his special gift that while he can so render the things seen that they take on unchanged new sharpness, new life, he is also able to suggest the unseen in the monstrous shapes of dead trees or strange seaside flotsam and hint at a spiritual order beneath the gnarled disorder of the outward face of things.

Janet Paul edits and introduces the book and presumably chose the pictures. The bibliographical and historical appendices are well done. Her graceful introduction pays tribute to Lee-Johnson's importance as an emancipator, 'a kind of sign post to a new direction' and as an example of self-confidence in his own resources and those of his own country. She should be congratulated with E. H. McCormick for their contributions to this heartening book, which the Department of Internal Affairs has helped to finance. The biggest bouquet must still be Lee-Johnson's own, for his endurance of every material hardship to allow full scope to the energy and daring of his magnificent talent.

*David Hall*

THE CALL HOME. James Courage. *Jonathan Cape*. 13s. 6d.

THE expatriate New Zealander who returns to his native setting is not a familiar figure in novels by New Zealanders. Dan Davin has presented foreign scenes to us viewed through the eyes of the New Zealander; John Mulgan's Johnson reflected with the neutral-

ity of a mirror the New Zealand scene as viewed by a foreigner. Now James Courage has chosen, as the central character of his latest book, the figure of the wanderer who has returned and who looks at the land of his upbringing objectively yet with longing.

Norman Grant, a youngish doctor threatened with a breakdown after the tragic loss of his wife in England, revisits the parental home in North Canterbury, seeking he doesn't quite know what. He dimly feels that a return to the uncomplicated life of his childhood is possible through a resumption of its habitual scene. But no return to the past is possible: his family have become new yet familiar figures, challenging his wish to wrap the past around him like a comforting blanket.

Nor does the landscape assist him. The comfortable house where he grew up he feels as 'indifferent to the immensity of the landscape outside the sheltering plantations. A century ago no man of white skin had been seen by these coastal hills, no English voice had spoken here. Norman shivered, feeling that the very foundations of the house were built on solitude, a soil lacking the humus of history.'

Even a visit to the well remembered boyhood paradise of his grandmother's up-country station in the shadows of the Alps is unavailing. What Wordsworth would have called the coarser pleasures of his boyhood days—angling, walking about the hills—leave him empty and unsatisfied. His grandmother's gentle counsel, to forget the past and marry again, has no meaning for him.

In such a mood of barren disappointment he meets a young English widow at the home of a friend in Christchurch. Linked at first by the hair thread of a fellow feeling for another in misfortune, Norman finds that he is more and more drawn to thoughts of Louise, though he finds that her marriage was a failure and that she has no intentions of remarrying. Finally he interrupts his travels about the familiar countryside and takes the decisive step of asking Louise to spend a few days with him at his grandmother's home. There, while the land is gripped by the great freeze of the winter, Norman is able to reassure Louise, and to experience the reawakening of a tenderness which will, we understand, once more give him confidence and peace of mind.

The story is very much richer than a bald summary of the plot would reveal. James Courage is the inheritor of an assured and confident narrative method, which combines delineation and shape with subtle nuance and symbol. The book is satisfyingly, though not arbitrarily coherent. Norman's visit, a pleasant though puzzling interlude to his family, a pilgrimage of hope to himself, is subdivided into the Aristotelian headings of a beginning, a middle and an end, though Mr Courage's implication is that the end is a beginning and the beginning an end.

This tightness of arrangement extends to what the dust wrapper most misleadingly describes as 'the delightful Grant family'. In

point of fact the Grant family is more than a little grim; and it is here that one feels most the expatriate's searching stare, laying bare the emptiness and boredom of the lives of everyone in the family except the old father who has no time for anything but his sheep and his land, and the married sister cheerfully engaged in running her husband and oppressing her little daughter with tyrannical love. Norman's mother, we find, has always half hated Norman for depriving her of her gay girlhood; Will, the brother who helps to work the farm, is desperately lonely, seeking consolation in playing the saxophone, in the excitement of flying or in the contents of the assortment of bottles he keeps under his bed; Meg, the unmarried daughter, feels with vague dissatisfaction that life has gone past her; her forced sprightliness and her solitary music recitals in her bedroom are forms of compensation.

In the course of the book, Norman has a conversation which seems to expose and to some extent resolve the clash of temperament between himself and his mother; but the latter is a sad faded woman, as uninteresting as a suburban tea table chat. Her rather negative and dreary resentment is a contrast with the outspoken impatience of her two children.

Mr Courage has been criticized for his predilection for laying the scenes of his novels in the limited sphere of the wealthy squatter class. But the problems he discusses in his books are not social problems; and the setting he creates has a solid individuality which helps us to accept his people without question.

Not so much can be said of his handling of dialogue. Mr Courage gives his plot shape and resilience by juxtaposing scenes of varying dramatic content. The conception is admirable but his execution is in places only indifferent. An occasional curious awkwardness descends on his characters in moments of stress; they are seized with an almost novelettish extravagance or else by uncharacteristic abruptness. The crisis of Norman and Louise's relationship, and Norman's reply to Elizabeth's news of her marriage are examples.

Firm in outline, precise in detail, the book is also enriched with a poetic insight into the nature of events. Reference has already been made to the image of the freeze and the thaw, and its equation with the removal of the barriers between the two main characters. Other seemingly casual images often strengthen the emotional impact of events. Thus Norman, spreading the wings of the swan which his brother has shot by accident, is told 'I didn't mean to bring her down. She killed herself . . .'

We are reminded at once of another death that was not meant. Similarly, in a larger way the pattern of the book gains poetic reinforcement from the actuality with which, in the year that Norman is home, the seasons play their part in establishing atmosphere. References to the prevailing weather, subtly woven into the narrative, strengthen the emotional climate of the several parts

of the plot: the heat and lassitude of Norman's return in summer; the chill frustration of autumn; the impasse of frozen winter and finally the renewed hope and forward looking of the spring-like conclusion.

One can only admire the organization and grasp that have gone to produce this fine, but uneven novel; thoughtfully fashioned, subtly blended in atmosphere and impression, its lapses of judgement are all the more inexplicable, coexisting as they do with such undeniable artistic talent.

*Paul Day*

THE TREE OF MAN. Patrick White. *Eyre and Spottiswoode*. 18s.

*So he had come away into the bush. He had in his pocket a piece of glass his grandmother had once given him. He lay on his back, on the sandy earth, on the root fibres and decomposing leaves, and looked through the glass at the crimson mystery of the world. What would he do?*

This occurs on the last page but one of this long Australian novel. We have met the coloured glass before, in the hands of a child Amy Parker had thought to adopt out of the flood; a child who would not stay. But the glass has remained; and 'the crimson mystery of the world'; and the question.

The mystery permeates: Stan Parker and his wife Amy, the 'figures' of the work, are a pivot about which revolves in slow gyration a mystery of season and human life. They are inarticulate; a quality they share with most of the characters of this novel.

The story is simple, in outline at least: the proportions are recognizably epic: the author's ambition is heroic. Stan Parker brings his wife to the holding he has hacked out of the bush: here he fathers two children, farms and grows old. Here, before he dies, he watches the unlovely tentacles of the suburbs embrace the farm.

The author's problem has been to find a method, a manner and style of exposing the inarticulate personality. Briefly, he resolves this difficulty by using a rich narrative analysis, and by devising or discovering those natural situations in which character can demonstrate itself in physical response. Thus neither fire nor flood are here simply as spectacle. Amy Parker's adultery with a travelling salesman isn't a simple matter of importuning desire; it is a frenzied and unsatisfactory assertion of an imprisoned personality. It is inevitable and inconclusive, compounded like much of the novel's action of an impossible ambivalence.

The whole life of the book is inconclusive: Mr White holds the mirror up to nature. But what formal art holds up to nature is much more a hoop: the Dame is made to perform, in response

to the discipline of certain formal rules. And perhaps it is just this which inhibits my final admiration. Where so much is admirable; where the comment is with a surprising frequency so apt and revealing; here it seems niggard to withhold one's praise. I do admire: I do praise. I also doubt. The disadvantage lies, it would seem, in the large conception, the lyric sweep. The impulse to such a grand and impressive movement is, I would suggest, generalized feeling. Other reviewers have mentioned Hardy, but in Hardy, to take it no further, the action is the particular abrasion of personality upon personality, the masks wearing away from just that constant attrition. This is dramatic impulse: the lyric impulse would seem to be different. The dramatic tensions, as between one inarticulate character and another, are severely slackened if the narrative, however excellent, has to create the language and the thought those characters cannot command.

Mr White's language is remarkable:

*Under the sad tree, more frond than bark, beside the girl's blurred face, less shape than longing, in an amorphous landscape of cows' breath and flannelly sheep's cud, his intention was absolute.*

Beginning like life, the novel continues like life. Every event blots out another, until time provides its dubious perspective. The flower is as big as a wheel when we lie in the grass: the eye is up against the event and everything is giant; but in human relation. Then something else is interposed—flood, or the cow calving—and that too is dominating, close and giant.

The novel is drenched with a slow pastoral observation; a delight in natural sights and sounds and smells. These are sensations which the characters must share with the author. It serves no purpose to question the author's accuracy over this: we can concern ourselves only with his imaginative perception and his ability to convince us of its truth. And whether or no he does that, I am not yet sure.

*Maurice Duggan*

A SPLINTER OF GLASS. Charles Doyle. *The Pegasus Press.* 12s. 6d.
MINE EYES DAZZLE. Alistair Campbell. New revised edition. *The Pegasus Press.* 9s. 6d.

MR DOYLE'S evocation of scene and atmosphere, particularly in dealing with the sea, is often vivid—

> In the headlong Winter when the hurled waves hammer
> With curling fists the promenade's cold plateau,
> Flinging against the rocks . . . .
>
> Omnivorous, the tide swallows, the wind tears
> Tears of spray from the impact. Nothing is spared
> The rage, the tantrum, the recriminations . . . .

Some avoidable definite articles, but one reads his poetry selecting lines like these, because few poems in the book are free from distracting flaws. The rhythms are sometimes loose, but most often well in hand. The largest faults occur in the images. They are too often inappropriate, seldom united through the poem with the inevitability one looks for. One is pleased by

> Rakish among the reeds
> Wild weather meets its end;

horrified in the same poem by the banality of

> You unravel me a dream
> From the fairisle skein of time,

and by what follows it. This inappropriateness of image occurs in poems like *'Seas and Black Houses'* where the poet seems unsure of what is happening to him in the process of writing. The charge of emotion has not found adequate terms—

> And she was my love then, moving through a dream
> Whose green hands touch her once, and never again
> Quiet as a star to slip into the waiting
> Empty room of the heart.

No logical relationship has been created between 'love', 'dream', 'hands', 'star', 'room' and 'heart'; one is bewildered because, it seems, the writer is bewildered too. Associated with this occasional bewilderment is Mr Doyle's tendency to 'fill', especially with factitious profundities of negation—

> Their silhouette
> Unmeaning in the darkness.

To tell us that 'molluscs lie meaningless upon the shore' is to add nothing to the scene except the fact that 'molluscs' lie in it. The meaninglessness (if in fact the poet feels it) is not illustrated. This kind of writing is a modern cliché, a kind of pseudo spice.

A final general complaint. Mr Doyle's tendency to self-dramatization with an associated habit of abstract philosophizing leads him away from the sharp scenes he can manage well, and into banality. I find myself rejecting lines like

> From my world's window I journey with moving winter,
> Search for my meaning. The rough and gentle hands
> Of my peasant forefathers greet with a curt gesture
> The foibles of my unknowing, bookish mind

because they combine sentimentality with a pose which in a coy, back-handed way, asks for approval.

It is easy enough, of course, to make these various criticisms

(easier than to write the poems). The overall effect may still be pleasing. Mr Doyle hits off some fine lines—

> and the tides take hope out surely on the ebb.
>
> Nothing moves
> Under the black, cloud-suffocated sky.
>
> we have no more than an eye and a flair for names.

Or the description of 'displaced persons' as 'spindrift of a world at sea'. But fragmentary enjoyment of this kind is not satisfying, and there are only a few poems in the book in which the writing is evenly good. One of them is 'Streamers Waving', where Mr Doyle has confined himself to the lyric expression of a single, manageable moment. There is nothing irrelevant, rhythm and image combine to create consistent atmosphere, and there is sharpness in the final line to round it off. Very different, but equally successful in its way, is the amusing 'Come up then, Ladies'.

The long title poem, 'A Splinter of Glass', can be used to illustrate most of Mr Doyle's abilities and weaknesses. Section I deals with the poet's departure from England, bound for a new home. The lines in this section are free-running. The dock scene carries with unusual tension his feelings at this point—

> The bars were closed. Only the gaunt sheds,
> Piles and porters' trolleys, miasmal, made
> Play upon the quays of the imagination.
> I sat uneasily in the formal lounges, half-each afraid
> Of staying and leaving.

The remainder of Section I is less satisfying. There are slick images that strike an unconvincing note—

> Sargasso Sea
> Eels of my thoughts breeding.
>
> In that blue, Brobdingnagian puddle, the Pacific.
>
> I tossed away a handful of days, coins
> For the beggar Time.

(Unconvincing in the first two instances because they are showy without illuminating anything; and in the third because Time is a tyrant, not a beggar—we cannot choose whether we pay or not.)

Apart from not believing that a young man should come to New Zealand 'expecting / Another London, a Paris,/ A Dublin', one notes that the lines are tighter in section II. A convincing contrast is drawn between the old world and the new—

> Only the hard hills trembling,
> At the City's bright knockered door

Hovering, took from the picture
Effect of miniature.

In the four sections that follow there is what seems to this reader inflation of a relatively commonplace experience—that of adjustment in a new land. The short lines of section IV, with their counterpointing of 'most often at evening', are skilfully handled—

And in that morning
When leaf and flower
Burst through our yearning
To their season's splendour,
Awakening to the alien
Day of our loss, we move
From want's aphelion
To a needed love.

As is most often the case in Mr Doyle's poetry, the success here is musical rather than verbal. The emotion in these sections is not mastered and made objectively precise. No tension is developed between acceptance and regret. The impression received is that of an extremely sensitive personality, but one too weak at the moment of writing to grasp the potential irony of its situation out of which a finer, crisper poetry might have emerged. The mood is prolonged and tends to hysteria—

I was the exile. In my hand
Grew weeds of grief and from my mouth
Came words of flame that made a drouth
And desert of the leafy land.

Yet the whole thing has an attractive musical sadness about it (like 'the pleasant whining of a mandolin').

In section VII the writer comes to accept 'the topography of his heart's new-settled acres'. The writing is again diffuse—

Beyond my window the pohutukawa
Breasted by bright medallions, her scarlet
Flowers, parades her splendour.

(Insofar as one can accept pohutukawa blossoms as 'medallions', one expects them to be 'bright', and realizes they are 'her scarlet flowers'.) Bitter is replaced by sweet, again without the tautness one hopes for in poetry—

The mind-filling pleasure of friends'
Voices finding a path through familiar subjects
Late of an evening, home-brew on the hearth,
And air cirrous with the smoke of cigarettes.

These are pleasures we all know and appreciate, but undistinguished reporting such as this is must depend for effect on the

reader's response to shared experience, rather than on its distinctive quality as poetry.

A selection of uncommon words is sprinkled through the poem —'mandamus', 'necrosis', 'miasmal', 'aphelion'; 'an empathy / With sun's diffraction moderate in my veins'. If these create an impression of intellectual command it is an illusion. Mainly they hold up one's reading.

Mr Doyle writes fluently, and the best things in his first book suggest that his next will be a much better one. Perhaps a large part of the poetic process is the discovery by the poet of the few things he can do well out of the many he can do in a second-rate manner. Mr Doyle does not seem to have made this discovery yet. He has a very fine ear and he responds sensitively to experience. But most of his poetry so far lacks the intellectual toughness that sharpens the edges of poetic emotion and makes its quality precise. The unevenness of his writing is perhaps partly the result of failures in self-criticism.

It is interesting to come back to Alistair Campbell's poetry. Of the four poems added since the original volume appeared six years ago, three are diffuse and untidy, and the fourth, 'Monument', is a minor success in the old manner. Hence the additions and subtractions of three editions make no difference to Mr Campbell's reputation, which still rests on only a few poems—the 'Elegy' (eight poems), 'The Return', and perhaps one or two others.

These few are very fine young poet's poetry (and therefore have a lasting charm), but as such their appeal is limited. To break them down into groups of word-types may seem a bleak approach, but in the case of the elegy it can be instructive. The following are taken from eight short poems. Abstract nouns: 'grace' (four times), 'pride' (three), 'glory' (two), 'grief', 'violence', 'beauty', 'gentleness', 'sweetness', 'majesty', 'strength', 'brilliance', 'agony', 'hope', 'ecstasy'. Adjectives include 'terrible' (three times), 'wild' (three), 'desolate' (two), 'twisted' (two), 'piteous' (two), 'hideous', 'blind', 'warped', 'shattered', 'restless', 'dark', 'colossal', 'bare', 'disconsolate', 'arrogant', 'bright', 'beautiful', 'calm'. (Violent movement is suggested adjectivally more often than by direct use of verbs.) Added to these are the Tennysonian participles 'glimmering', 'gleaming', 'moaning', 'steaming', 'smoking', 'swarming', 'tumbling', 'dancing', 'wrestling', 'fleeing', 'bleeding', 'journeying', 'groping'.

Such a welter would make nonsense if it were not for the concrete objects on which it centres—trees, water, stones and wind; cliffs and gorges; hares and hawks. These are weighed against the tonnage of abstraction, and the result is often clear and hard.

But the question remains whether words of the type listed above are not too often simply embedded in the rhetoric, and used to denote qualities which the poet has not been able to represent by more valid means. Certainly only some of the abstract nouns find concrete equivalents. Mr Campbell does not use his 'poetic' words

in any individual or surprising way. It is the sheer weight of them, their repetition, and their existence within a framework of elegaic rhetoric, that makes the poetry.

Without wishing to belittle Mr Campbell's very obvious talent, it seems fair to attribute his sales success (his must be the first book of New Zealand poetry to go into a third edition) to this technique. It may be that to the average educated reader interested in local poetry, this bright array is such stuff as poems are made on.

*Mine Eyes Dazzle* is brilliant, immature verse, and in lieu of more substantial new work Mr Campbell the poet must be judged as he was judged six years ago.

*C. K. Stead*

THE VOYAGE OF THE HURUNUI. D'Arcy Cresswell. *The Caxton Press.* 25s.

*The Voyage of the Hurunui* is one of the oddest and most ambitious poems yet produced by a New Zealand poet. It is also one of the dullest. The ballad has some fine lines and groups of lines, but all in all it is a depressing performance, unworthy of a poet of Mr Cresswell's gifts. If you come to it, as I did, hoping for a simple vigorous ballad, you are in for a surprise. For this is the unlikeliest of ballads—a didactic ballad. It is essentially a sermon, dressed up in the paraphernalia of a supernatural ballad, against 'this bad World' of Technology which Mr Cresswell so much fears and detests. The ballad takes the form of a narrative in the tangled mind of a 'well-educated able-seaman' who suffers from the delusion that his ship, the *Hurunui*, is bearing away from land, whereas it is actually nearing land. Imagined spirits, who at great length warn him against making landfall 'where the Fiend rules all', add to his confusion and ours. The symbolism of the 'real' and 'imaginary' voyage is plain enough, but is so far-fetched as to be totally unreal. Mr Cresswell has long had a quarrel with the times, but in this poem, due perhaps to a defect in his conception and to a failure of imagination, he has made it neither significant nor interesting.

Mr Cresswell has always been 'heartily glad' of archaisms, and in his 'Lyttelton Harbour' sonnets and elsewhere he showed that when aptly used archaisms are capable of taking on new life. But here, they are beginning to show their age. 'Beforn' rhyming with 'born' will not do, nor will the following example:

> With this key at last the Fiend unfast
> That door and darted through.

'Unfast' is unnatural and harsh. I suspect that Mr Cresswell coined it for the sake of the rhyme. If that is so, he has not enriched the language.

In a wider sense the whole poem is an archaism. The conception and treatment, the expected rhymes and tired metres, and the supernatural flummery mark it as a piece of 'fashionable verse-making' in an early nineteenth century manner, although the action is actually set in the year 1950. It owes much to *The Ancient Mariner*, but while *The Ancient Mariner* can be enjoyed for its story and symbolic content, *The Voyage of the Hurunui* cannot. It merely exasperates because of its shapelessness, monotony, and compulsive moralizing.

At his best, and especially in his prose pieces, Mr Cresswell writes lucidly and forcefully, but in *The Voyage of the Hurunui* precision has gone by the board. He is often inexact and this, together with his muddled metaphysics, adds to the bleariness of his effects:

> For we brushed aside the chasms wide
> Which else all concrete parts divide.

Can you 'brush aside' chasms? Or does 'brush aside' here mean 'ignore'? And isn't the second line ambiguous?

And again:

> And down, deep down we'll see
> On the far sea-bed a forest spread
> Like the wild, dark brain in each man's head
> Ere the reason was, and we'll shake for dread
> For we'll know that wild is we.

This passage contains an extraordinary simile (Mr Cresswell alone knows what man's brain looked like 'ere the reason was'); 'wild' appears unexpectedly as a singular noun; and the last line is comically ugly.

There are pages of this sort of thing (the soul of one of the seamen is speaking):

> 'Now the mind that's born of the abstract Dawn
> 'And the concrete parts of sight,
> 'Of those contraries twain if it grow more fain
> 'Of one, doth half itself disdain,
> 'Which makes a rift within the brain,
> 'A discord dark as night.
> 'The Devil saw this seeming flaw
> 'Which is to all things as a law
> 'Whence even Love its life doth draw,
> 'And he chortled with delight!'

I find this passage meaningless. What, for example, are the 'abstract Dawn' and the 'concrete parts of sight'? And how can the mind be born of them? To what do the 'contraries twain' refer? To the abstract Dawn and the concrete parts of sight, or

to the duality of flesh and spirit, which we are to assume? What do the last four lines mean? In what way is 'this seeming flaw' a law to all things? The two 'ofs' in lines 3 and 4 are awkward, and 'chortled' is unfortunate. This stanza is a mesh of clichés and abstract nouns through which the meaning and the poetry are allowed to slip, like water through a sieve.

I have chosen these three passages to show Mr Cresswell's loosening grip on language, which I consider tragic. I might have chosen many others which would have served my purpose equally well.

To end with, here's a list of clichés, which I have chosen at random: 'gem of purest ray', 'the wind howls o'er the lea', 'charmèd tide', 'wingèd sprite', 'the pleasant month of May', 'man's fallen state', 'dawn-lit wings', 'utmost power', 'burning shame'. The profusion of clichés throughout the poem suggests that Mr Cresswell is as heartily glad of them as he is of archaisms. If that is so, then it is not surprising that *The Voyage of the Hurunui* is as dead as it is. By publishing it the Caxton Press, usually reliable, has done New Zealand poetry a disservice.

*Alistair Campbell*

THE BIRDSVILLE TRACK AND OTHER POEMS. Douglas Stewart. *Angus & Robertson.* 15s.
THREE MEN AND SYDNEY. Nancy Keesing. *Angus & Robertson.* 15s.

MUCH OF Douglas Stewart's verse provokes the question, is there a strictly poetic impulse at work here? In his early poems moments of clear-eyed perception which share the soberness of the thirties can be watched dissolving in an over-facile literariness that seems a relic from the twenties—the twenties and thirties in New Zealand, that is. I suspect here a conflict between the man who sees and is impelled to put down sharply the truth of what he sees, and the reporter trained, no matter what his material, to make a good story of it, even at the sacrifice of clarity and truthfulness. A fatal glibness seems to run away with the original impulse and direct the completed poem; tongue and pen are so ready, and so voluble, they seldom allow mind and heart to be heard. In consequence, Mr Stewart is sometimes writing, it appears, from tongue and pen only, so that one can't always quite trust his statements: does he really mean this, or is it simply a flourish? A number of his poems, too, are written in a sort of make-believe tone that I find distinctly embarrassing: they ring false with the vacuous unreality of Norman Lindsay's nymphs and satyrs. His ballads often strike this note, for example 'The Bunyip', 'The Magpie', 'Child and Lion', in *The Dosser in Springtime;* it is

a note of uneasy fantasy that recurs in Australian painting and poetry, in reaction perhaps to the hard-boiled and sometimes equally unreal realism of much Australian work. Yet through these and other ballad-like poems Mr Stewart has apparently been working towards a vein of genuine poetry; he drew closer to it in some of the shorter pieces in *Sun Orchids;* he now strikes it more clearly in this latest collection, in several delightful unforced pieces, 'The Night of the Moths', 'Murrumbidgee', 'The Brown Snake', and others in the title sequence, more authentic than any of his work hitherto.

Mr James Baxter, reviewing this book in the *New Zealand Listener,* asked whether 'birds, frogs, crabs, . . ., really mean as much to Mr Stewart as the poems would like to say?' and declared that in the title sequence he 'takes us from nature study to the more difficult study of man' and has found maturity in doing so. But isn't this to read Mr Baxter's theory into Mr Stewart's practice? Half the poems in the sequence describe the pitiless Central Australian desert itself; the others are less a 'study of man' in Mr Baxter's sense than scenes of men on the track, often moving, sometimes symbolic, showing what the desert does to them. In fact birds, animals, the natural environment, move Mr Stewart to some of his best poems. Man is not isolated in his picture, he doesn't 'study' man: he is not that kind of reflective or speculative poet although now and then finely imaginative. Rather he is the observant evocative commentator, whose perceptions when he doesn't inflate them find expression in clear shapely poems rendering an Australia, natural and human, that rings true.

Nancy Keesing is a poet who writes easily, genially, rather jauntily, but rarely shapes her work enough to make it memorable. Her strongest poems, those about Sydney and Sydney people, contain good material insufficiently worked on; the result is blurred, the poems remain approximations. She is still in search of a voice more surely her own; she hasn't yet got to the heart of what she wants to say, or found a way of saying that will take her to the heart of it. Although one or two of the simpler pieces are perhaps the most finished in this book, it is a richer, looser, but better controlled conversational style that she may be expected to develop. The last and first poems here, with the title piece and a few others both in this and in her earlier book, suggest that her development may be of much interest.

*Charles Brasch*

THE RISE OF THE NEW ZEALAND LIBERAL PARTY, 1880-90. T. G. Wilson. *Auckland University College*. Bulletin No. 48, History Series No. 6.

THE period of political life in New Zealand covered by Mr Wilson's pamphlet is very largely *terra incognita*. We see it obscurely, veiled in the mists of legend and tradition, a barely explored hinterland to the age of Seddon and Liberal reforms. It has failed to attract the attention of critical historians in the way that the Treaty of Waitangi or the early provincial governments have done. It is known to us largely through the accounts of contemporaries like Saunders, Rusden and Pember Reeves, whose accounts tend, as is common with men who write of events in which they had a share or which happened in their own time, to be apologetic rather than analytical. Of this it would of course be unreasonable to complain. But unfortunately their books have not been replaced by modern studies using newer methods of historical investigation. No historian has yet published any analysis of the workings of the parliamentary system in New Zealand which can be compared with work now available on many periods of British history. There has been no serious attempt to go behind the facade of party names and class generalizations and to examine individual members of parliament, their backgrounds, personal and regional connections, voting records and so on. Indeed, the map of the world of New Zealand history is still a flat one, as it might have been drawn by a Macaulay or a Green, with its straight lines of progress leading towards fore-ordained Liberal goals. We have yet to adopt the 'discoveries' of Sir Lewis Namier, and to embody them in new projections which will show other dimensions.

As it happens, the dominant interpretation of the 1880s which Mr Wilson had to guide him was that which descends from Reeves through Lipson's *The Politics of Equality*. That tradition is frankly apologetic. It takes 1891 as the dividing point in New Zealand history, when the old privileged order handed over to the new forces of democracy. Moreover, it takes land-ownership as the determining factor in political affairs. Land divided conservatives from progressives, dictated attitudes towards democratic principles and methods of public finance, and gave its impulse to the liberal movement. And, since 1891 was the moment of political realism, when these things came at last to be clearly expressed in the system of political life, the tradition sees the 1880s as years of political immaturity, when great events were still in the womb of time. Reasonably enough, it describes the structure of national politics in this period as a loose one, lacking clear distinctions of party or principle. Provincial impulses had been weakened—though not destroyed—by the abolition of the provinces in 1876: great national or class issues had not yet arisen. What remained was a collection of small political groups or coteries, linked

loosely to individual leaders or local affiliations; moving round the area of political life with the apparent inconsequence of nomadic tribes in the Arabian desert.

The one apparently constant factor was seen as the 'Continuous Ministry'; a group of politicians from the upper classes of colonial society, representing all its conservative interests, who contrived by a series of protean changes to monopolize political power in their own hands. Their aim was to protect property and privilege from the attacks of the rising proletariat in the towns, and from the land-hunger of those who wanted to become small-farmers. Against the continuous pressure of liberal forces, the conservatives fought a long rear-guard action, conceding democratic electoral rights only when their flank was turned by Sir George Grey, but clinging to the 'Country quota' as a corrective to the power of the urban lower class vote. By 1890 the 'Continuous Ministry' had shot its bolt: it had no answer to the problems of the depression, and it was swept away by a flood of social-democratic enthusiasm in the elections of that year.

Opposed to these conservatives, there were the 'liberals'. Brought into parliamentary action by Sir George Grey, but almost stifled at birth by the inability of their maker to have any but subordinates associated with him, the group led by Montgomery and Ballance was in a perpetual minority in the parliaments of the decade. All its moves for radical reform were killed by the conservative majority; and it could only wait, with its lamps lit, ready for the day when the electorate would catch up with its ideas, and give it effective political power.

In brief outline this is also the account which Mr Wilson gives of the course of political life in the 1880s. Within its framework he has given a clear and interesting analysis of the parliamentary meanderings of the small group of radicals. He emphasizes their perpetual disunity, their inability to agree upon any concerted policy, even on such vital issues as land tenures, taxation, native affairs, and their own leadership. He makes it clear that they were not at any time an effective party either inside the House or at the polls. Their only chance of achieving political power lay in an alliance with some other Parliamentary group, such as was formed in 1884 with Vogel, and such a ministry could clearly not be regarded as a 'liberal' one. Yet Mr Wilson clearly feels that the future was bound to be theirs. Time was on their side. Conservatism was doomed by its inability to meet the challenge of the times, and the 'liberals' held the keys to the future prosperity of the country.

It is perhaps ungrateful to complain that, within the limitations imposed by a short pamphlet of forty-two pages Mr Wilson should not have done more than restate an accepted interpretation with added clarity. Yet it must be said that he does not really justify the title he has chosen. To talk of 'The rise of the New Zealand

Liberal Party' is to suggest that in this period developments took place which produced the victorious ministry of 1891, in contrast wih the hopeless minority group of 1880. If they did take place, this pamphlet supplies no evidence for them. Indeed, one gains far more the impression of the decline of the ebullient radicalism of Sir George Grey's ministry of 1877 into petty faction and fundamental disagreement, lasting up to 1890 itself. Within the House the liberals were clearly incapable of forming a policy or subordinating personal idiosyncrasies to a common front: and we are given no reason to suppose that in the country their cause was better served, or that any 'liberal' organization was being built up. The events of 1890 have thus the appearance of an unforeseen and undeserved catastrophe, which transformed a decadent radical movement into a dominant social-democratic government. This may, indeed, be the most likely account of what happened: but to call it 'the rise' of the liberals is to give to what happened the appearance of inevitability; an impression which is heightened by Mr Wilson's use of such phrases as 'the slow but irrevocable collapse of the Continuous Ministry'. This is to read history backwards with a vengeance.

Such an interpretation cannot be accepted as final. In the first place, to class all politicians who were not with Stout and Ballance as 'conservatives', and to describe the series of ministries between 1880 and 1890 as 'The Continuous Ministry' is to impose categories appropriate to a political structure in which there are two parties, roughly defined along social lines, onto a period where there were no parties, and where the lines of demarcation on matters of principle were extremely fluid. By what standards were these men 'conservative'? By the standards of post-1891 social legislation, certainly they were. But were they by the standards set by the needs and ideas of the country in the 1880s? Again, is it useful to refuse to see 'liberal' elements in any of the ministries of the 1880s, simply because they did not take the precise form of later 'liberalism'? By the standards of British politics of the same period, almost all New Zealand politicians were 'liberal' in their attitudes to political democracy, and even to social problems. Clearly men like Ballance were more 'liberal' in the social-democratic sense than men like Hall. But where does the sharp dividing line come? Mr Wilson asks and answers this question by implication. 'One wonders . . . at what point a "Liberal of the old school" becomes a conservative, especially considering the "social friendship" with "the landed squatters" which Rolleston is admitted to have enjoyed.' Here he lets the cat out of the bag. A true 'liberal' must be one who is immune to the blandishments of social intercourse with the landowners and vested interests. He should either be a member of the lower class, or at least see politics as a matter of class struggle over land and social advantage. Had Mr Gladstone been a New Zealand politician he would clearly have been dis-

qualified by his social contacts with members of the landed aristocracy from the title of 'liberal,' and would have been classed with Atkinson as a 'positive conservative'.

It may in fact be suggested that there is need for a new approach to the nature of political life in New Zealand in the period between 1876 and 1890. It is clearly beyond the scope of a short review to suggest the lines along which such a reinterpretation might proceed, but it can at least be said that the prerequisites are first, a detailed study of new material; and second, a great deal of detailed analysis of the basic elements of political life: politicians, their electorates, their backgrounds, their voting records, and so on. Under the first heading, would come a study of the collections of personal papers which are available, more particularly the Hall papers, which throw a great deal of light on the realities of political life, and the internal workings of a ministry in the 1880s. Under the second would come detailed investigation of the personal records of the relatively small number of politicians in the period, and of their parliamentary records. Mr Wilson has not been able to use much original material. His only two references to manuscript are both letters from Ballance to Stout, in the Stout Papers: and he appears to have relied mainly on sound knowledge of newspapers and Parliamentary debates; nor has he undertaken any detailed study of the liberals as individuals. How consistent were they in their bringing up and supporting radical motions? On what issues did they normally vote together, and on what did they disagree? Did they appeal to their constituencies on genuinely radical issues? Perhaps such detailed study was outside Mr Wilson's terms of reference. It might however be worth hazarding a guess that the result of such investigation would make necessary as fundamental a reappraisement of the period covered by Mr Wilson's pamphlet as took place for the reign of George III on the publication of Sir Lewis Namier's studies a generation ago.

*D. K. Fieldhouse*

FORMAL LOGIC. A. N. Prior. *Oxford: The Clarendon Press.* 35s.

THIS book is in three main parts. Part I deals with the propositional calculus and with quantification theory. In addition to discussing most of the standard topics, Professor Prior introduces a good deal of material which is not usually found in text books of this kind, including the use of functorial variables, and the development of systems of propositional calculus which use a 'standard false proposition'. The treatment is marked by the inclusion of a large number of formal proofs.

Throughout the greater part of the book, the symbolism of the

Polish logician Lucasiewicz is used. Professor Prior claims that this is 'unquestionably the best symbolism for most purposes'. I agree that it is convenient for many purposes, particularly at the level of the propositional calculus. Even at this level, however, there are some procedures for which it is not well suited. The process of reducing expressions to normal form, for instance, is much more straightforward for the average student if the *Principia Mathematica* symbolism is used, since the analogies with ordinary algebraic operations, awareness of which facilitates the handling of the distribution laws, are far more evident in that notation. At the level of quantification theory, I am still inclined to think that the *Principia Mathematica* symbolism is more perspicuous.

The introduction to the basic material is clear and concise. It could however, have been improved by a more thorough discussion of the relation between the logical operators and the words of ordinary speech which are often used to 'translate' them. The divergences are mentioned but not explored in any great detail. It is indeed a feature of the book that logic is discussed very much as an end in itself. The emphasis throughout is on the development of axiom systems. This will tend to diminish its value as a textbook for any but advanced students, since it is, in my view, desirable that in the early stages the study of logic should be closely related to the analysis of actual arguments, and the development of both mechanical and deductive methods of proving validity.

Part II deals with the traditional formal logic. This is treated in an illuminating way, though familiar topics often appear in unfamiliar dress. The most notable feature of this part of the book, however, is the introduction of considerable discussion of medieval and post-medieval elaborations of traditional logic, much of which is not readily available elsewhere. For this reviewer this was in many ways the most interesting part of the book. The traditional logic emerges as an altogether more powerful instrument than its modern critics usually allow.

Part III deals with modal logic, three valued logics, and the logic of classes and of relations, leading on to the foundations of arithmetic. The chapter on modal logic includes a section on 'deontic logic' or the attempt to construct a 'logic of obligations'. Professor Prior's careful discussion of this suggests to this reader that the whole project is misguided. Actual moral concepts have meaning within moral codes of varying degrees of internal complexity. It is difficult to see how such concepts can possibly be adequately treated in an extensional logic.

In reading this book, one is continually aware that the author is not only complete master of his subject, but delights in it. Much of this interest cannot but be communicated to any reader who is at all favourably inclined. Those who have not been already 'softened' by an introduction to logic which keeps closer to the

conception of logic as the analysis and testing of concrete arguments may not be so open to persuasion, but they can hardly fail to be aware of the author's skill and learning. The University of New Zealand is fortunate in having such an expert logician among its philosophers.

Misprints are inevitable in a book of this kind. I have noticed the following: p.181, six lines from the bottom—the last element in the formula should be x, not y; p.224, para. 2, line 8—NPc should read NPa; p.277—the same symbol is used for both 'domain' and 'converse domain'; p.85, line 10—the proposition about Brutus and Caesar does not exemplify the form it purports to.

*R. G. Durrant*

# CORRESPONDENCE

To The Editor

Sir: English had its first Chair in Oxford and Cambridge at the turn of the century. It has never been adequately taught, and probably never will be: it is altogether too rich, flexible and difficult. Post-primary education for the great bulk of our children is quite new: thirty years ago there were 20,000 odd children in New Zealand schools, now we have 100,000. In the same time the total school population has risen from 200,000 to 485,000. Most of the youngsters who go through to Form V have parents who did not go beyond Standard 6. Research in England suggests that the results are almost inevitable: children from 'uncultured' homes do not succeed well at near-University level, when compared with children of equivalent intelligence from homes rich in books and conversation. But this is not to say that an extraordinary revolution has not taken place: one bringing 'culture', via the school, to many who previously had small opportunity. English literature, far from being 'slowly closed' to our children, has some hope of being rapidly opened. Meanwhile, of course, there are conflicting tendencies. Mass-production in industry is paralleled by mass-mindedness, and speed of living by bitsymindedness. Society by and large is much worse here than the school. But against this set, *pace* your editorial and Dr Margaret Dalziel's letter, a more intelligent approach to education. As I see it more children are being educated by better methods. And on the specific questions at issue, we have:

1 A school library service which is the envy of all visiting educationists;

2 A practical approach to the problem of catering for different abilities; and

3 An unfortunate hangover from the past, in the form of books of extracts, which nevertheless have a limited value.

I find it difficult to discuss grammar teaching (the fourth point at issue) in a paragraph or two. But let me make these points:

1 It is possible to know grammatical terms, and to speak and write ungrammatically;

2 It is possible to speak and write grammatically without any knowledge of grammatical terms;

3 It is more important to be grammatical than to know grammar;

4 It is impossible to *teach* language without combining example and practice of 'good usage' with conventional explanations, i.e., without using grammatical terms;

5 Teachers who fail to do so are irresponsible, and should consult the Primary School Syllabus! (Secondary teachers and leader writers please note.)

Contrary to popular opinion grammar is still in the prescription. But methods are undergoing transition precisely at a time when numbers are posing new problems: in buildings, sizes of classes, and teacher training. The new methods are better methods. Indeed, they are in line with your contention that a difficult world must be *understood*. As I see it, every grammar lesson should be primarily concerned with subject matter, secondarily with communication, thirdly with examination of the terms used, fourthly with codification. In the past we inverted this order. In 1926 17,500 children left New Zealand primary schools. One third left, aged fourteen plus, without 'Proficiency'. One third of those who went on to secondary education left in Form III. One third of those who reached Form IV left in Form IV. And so on. It wasn't only that there was lack of economic opportunity; the methods were wrong too. The machine was inflexible. It didn't make scholars, it broke them. And our generation can't hold a candle to the one that's coming. It didn't have a chance.

*Anton Vogt*

[Mr Vogt like Miss Stevens (*Landfall* 38) has a touching faith in the magical efficacy of 'prescriptions'. It is a faith that has lost touch with the reality on which all such prescription depends: the competence of teachers. The best prescriptions for teaching must remain ineffective when teachers are themselves so ill-taught, with so little command of English, that they are incapable of doing what is asked of them; and that is the condition of many teachers who have gone through training college and university for years past. Nothing that correspondents have argued can get over this brute fact, which is due to one thing only: inadequate methods of teaching English in schools. The process is self-perpetuating, a vicious circle. How is it to be broken?—*Editor.*]

SIR: Mr Palmer, 'the liberal representative of the standards, the values of art', has nothing significant to say: Messrs Morrison and Vickers, with a great deal to say, do not achieve these standards. Is this what I said? Implicitly, yes. But I referred also, and quite specifically, to Mr Palmer's previous work as something conditioning my present disappointment.

At one or two points, however, and here I agree with Mr Walsh (in your last number), I was not explicit enough. I had meant to suggest, over the whole review, that Mr Palmer might have derived some benefit had he been possessed of something of the vitality and sense of immediacy of Messrs Morrison and Vickers; and that Messrs Morrison and Vickers might in their turn have derived some benefit had they been possessed of something of Mr Palmer's feeling for formal discipline.

My criticism of *The Mirage* was related to the author's failure to develop what I thought to be the general potentialities of his novel, as a novel. My comparison with Mr Palmer was made because I remarked in Mr Palmer just that sense of form, and range of technical control, which would best have served Mr Vickers in the domination of his material. I thought, and think still, that *The Mirage* suffers, as a novel, through its author being largely at the mercy of his material. I am genuinely at a loss to discover in my review any support for Mr Walsh's counter that my strictures were directly related to an antipathy for the subject, or subjects, of any of the books.

The sentence which has given Mr Walsh his greatest affront is this: 'It [*The Mirage*] is not a novel because its direct aim is to prompt action, to promote reform by means of dramatic indictment.' A sentence ambiguous, I will admit, in its absolute tone; though *I* see it as qualified by the sentence which precedes it. However, fundamentally I agree that Mr Walsh has considerable grounds for wishing for something more explicit. More especially as I admit that the novel can have, as one of its aims, just what my sentence seems to deny for it. My meaning should have been expanded: I should have added that unless it also manages something much more than indictment, or accusation, or exposure, or what you will, then it fails, formally, as a novel. I didn't find Mr Vickers's novel boring; but I didn't find it a vehicle constructed with enough cunning to bear this load without a fair amount of propping and pushing from the reader.

The appalling situation of the main character is something which responds to impassioned description: the demonstration of character and the inevitability of personality, the truth of the man's humanity, is something more difficult of presentation. In choosing a 'tone' adequate to the first of these, Mr Vickers committed himself, I think, to a tone quite unsuited to the second. Obviously I did not intend to say that he should *not* be worked on by his material; it is a *sine qua non* that he should be. But the

corollary is, for me, his obligation to discover in the material, by the disciplines of the medium he is working in, its formal truth. He must advance to that point where he is in control of his material. Highfalutin' aesthetics? I don't think so. I have already admitted that, if this is a yard-stick, I do not always sigh that there are not, in every case, thirty-six inches to match it.

In saying that *The Mirage* did not, for me, succeed as a novel, I was not impugning the author's motives, nor questioning the strength of his material. I assumed that this would be taken for granted—an incorrect assumption I now see. Neither did I anywhere say that the work failed as an indictment. In denying it success in one sense I said 'one must admit its passionate existence in other terms'.

Finally; I don't think Mr Walsh has any quarrel with me over a difference in our estimations of literary achievement. The main reference here must be, of course, the books themselves; it is to these which anyone interested in this question must turn.

*Maurice Duggan*

SIR: In a community where so many habits change so quickly for the worse it is reassuring to know that Mr Fairburn, vigilant as ever for the Arts, is still peering under his bed in case the State Literary Fund's minions lie hidden there. We have gathered, in the past, that the Fund has purposed bribery and corruptions too various to be politely named; we learn now that habits change, and most nefariously: the agents of the State now purpose to nobble the old tomcat. This is wickedness indeed.

One may thank Mr Fairburn for standing on guard (is that charming Roman an icon of Elam, watching his Vesuvius rain down ashes on the faithful?) but one cannot thank him for again trotting out that vague and anonymous set of convenient whipping-boys, the younger writers. Younger, may we ask, than whom? Bedazzled, by Fairburn's glittering eunuchs as they queue up for their handout or his tomcats bargaining mice for milk, we do not see his answer plain.

Mr Fairburn has a reputation for honest dealing, so when he asserts the 'younger writers' have a soup-kitchen mentality we must remember his honesty and his concern for the arts and consider him seriously. He would not make his charge lightly, and the best way to see how justified he is in crying soup and kickshaws is to check the State Literary Fund grants. Who, vulgarly, has copped the biggest kitty? Not, we fear, the younger writers, named or no.

Mr Fairburn says State subsidies mean some measure of State control, a *trahison des clercs* (that good, but old ticket) and a genteel castration, and a begging for collars and chains. Sir, you will scarcely need reminding, and neither should Mr Fairburn, that *Landfall* is published with the aid of a grant; that issues of the *Arts Year Book,* for which Mr Fairburn edited the poetry section, received grants; that the *New Zealand Poetry Year Book* has published Mr Fairburn, and presumably paid him for the privilege at a time when the *Year Book* was receiving a grant; and that the New Zealand University Press published Mr Fairburn's *Three Poems.* The University, he tells us, is dependent on State funds.

Is it Mr Fairburn's part to call names? It may be said, harshly, that your essayist has shown us to run with hounds and hunt with hares. Or is he subtly showing us how to touch pitch and not be defiled? There is another metaphor which may be derived from Mr Fairburn's abundance but it would be better for him to point that, and an impertinence if I were to do so.

*Kendrick Smithyman*

## NEW CONTRIBUTORS

*E. K. Braybrooke.* Educated at Stratford Technical High School, Auckland and Victoria University Colleges, Columbia University. Barrister and Solicitor. Senior Lecturer in the Department of Jurisprudence, Victoria University College, since 1947. Special Fellow, Columbia Law School, 1948-9. Special interests: Jurisprudence and Roman Law, Public and Private International Law. Member of Council and Assistant Research Secretary, New Zealand Institute of International Affairs.

*Paul Day.* Born in Pukekohe 1916; educated at Auckland University College. Served in the Middle East in 24 Battalion; captured; and escaped to Switzerland. After the war read English at Merton College, Oxford. Became a public school master. Returned to New Zealand in 1949. Taught and lectured in English. Is now a bookseller.

*D. K. Fieldhouse.* Born Mussoorie, North India, 1925, educated at Dean Close School, Cheltenham, and Queen's College, Oxford. War service with the Fleet Air Arm, 1943-7. Senior history master, Haileybury College, 1949-52. Lecturer in History, Canterbury University College, 1953.

*J. Y. T. Greig.* Born in China 1891; educated in Scotland. Has taught English in universities in England, U.S.A., South Africa and New Zealand. About to retire from the chair of English at the University of Otago. Author of *David Hume, Thackeray, a Reconsideration,* and other works, including fiction. Editor of *Letters of David Hume.*

*Douglas MacDiarmid.* Born in Taihape 1922. Went to France after the war to paint, and worked in the south and in Paris; has since paid one visit to New Zealand. Never went to an art school, but has gone to life classes in London and Paris when it was the only way of finding a model. Has exhibited with The Group in Christchurch and held one-man shows in New Zealand, London and Paris.

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

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# LANDFALL

A NEW ZEALAND QUARTERLY

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